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IN THE ISLE OF THE BEHOLDER

TRAVERSING PLACE, EXPLORING REPRESENTATIONS

AND EXPERIENCES OF COOK ISLANDS TOURISM

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Abstract

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AND EXPERIENCES OF COOK ISLANDS TOURISM

Tourism is a salient contemporary context for tangled cross-cultural experiences and representations. Holidaying tourists, and those people who deal with tourists in ‘host’ countries, focus on making the present holiday moment a significant event. But while emphasis appears to be on the present time this relies on recourse to notions of past. For most tourists to the Cook Islands their own societies’ pasts are imagined (even fictionalised), romanticised, and reflected in their experiences on holiday of a simpler, more relaxed pace of life. Further connections are made by contemporary tourists to other pasts - those earlier perspectives of other Western travellers, such as explorers and travel writers, who have gazed at and experienced the islands in former times.

Tourists seek authenticity both in themselves and in the people and places they visit and for Cook Islanders engaged in the tourism industry there is also a concern with authenticity. Expressions of national and cultural identities are performed to tourists and to themselves. Tourists are encouraged to participate in life in the Cooks while there, emphasising Cook Islanders’ capacity for generosity and inclusivity - a statement of cultural authenticity.

This is a story of tourists’ (‘guests’) and Cook Islanders’ (‘hosts’) experiences and representations of peoples and places through the tourism industry. It questions the relationship of ‘tourism’ and culture’ in tourism encounters. Rather than assuming that the hosts’ culture is necessarily negatively impacted by tourism, it examines the lived experiences of Cook Islanders who work with tourism and how they talk about and perform their own expressions of identity.

The ethnography further questions notions of dwelling and movement, considering tourists and Cook Islanders in place and on the move. Being on the move and being in place are examined through narrative points of reflection made by the ethnographer. Broader reflections on how anthropologists practise and how we conceive of our practice ripple out from this ethnographic inquiry.
I could not have embarked on this study without the support of many other people.

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Prologue

ANTHROPOLOGICAL HORIZONS, ETHNOGRAPHIC WAVES

If we believe that culture is heavy, ponderous, static,
If it's a slowly changing beast,
If there is nothing new under the sun,
If culture is a burden, even oppressive, a weight to bear,

THEN:
It takes a giant to move the world, even a little.

BUT:
If we see culture as always in production, as constituted and
reconstituted in every act,
If we agree with the American pragmatists, with Dilthey, and
with the hermeneutic tradition that meaning is not prior to
an event but is emergent in the event,
If we agree with the French poststructuralists that events do not
simply trigger or release a preexisting meaning buried in the
text, underlying surface manifestations, behind them or be­
neath them, and if we see meaning as uncontrollable, as rad­
ically symbolic,
If we see culture as alive, in constant movement,
If we agree that every cultural expression is different, however
slightly, from the previous expression, if only because the
context is different,
If we agree that the various domains of culture are not congruent
and do not replicate one another, but rather that there is a
dynamic tension between domains,
If we acknowledge that cultural codes, rules, and norms never
encompass all of the situations in which individuals find them­
selves, so that improvisation is a cultural imperative,
If we believe that cultural transmission is not a mechanical rep­
lication or reproduction of the heavy heritage of the past,
If we believe all these things, and if we believe in an anthropology
of experience, practice and performance,

THEN:
One does not have to be a Napoleon to change a culture.
The little guy has a chance.
It's not so easy to change culture, but we do it all the time.
And if this is so, then creative personas have a wide-open field.
She and he, can do anything - if not move the world then, at
the very least, they can move themselves and their culture.
What Shostak found for the !Kung is actually universal;
‘creative expression takes place almost anywhere, during any
segment of the day.’

Plotting a topic

Bruner’s verse frees up our thinking about culture. It invites us to let go of a conception of culture as some thing, and imagine culture as living -and intrinsic to ourselves. What’s more, it enables us to imagine culture as both quite ordinary (encompassing the mundane happenings of everyday life) and yet rather remarkable (encompassing the impetus for change) - as always present but in constant flux, reproducing and creating knowledge. For me this free verse is more than an anthropologist’s creative musing on the contested concept culture at the heart of the discipline. It challenges us to consider both how we practise and how we conceive of our practice.

This prologue addresses how I have taken up this challenge in my study of tourism in the Cook Islands and how I regard the anthropological horizon. The prologue is three tiered. It historically contextualises the practice and the study of tourism and it locates my project in relation to other anthropological studies involving tourism. Finally, it offers an invitation to the reader to consider the power of narrative in writing ethnography. If culture is understood as a fluid process it necessitates the work of representing it as such and challenging those static views. Like most anthropologists, my representations are created textually. I ask that the reader read both structure and style of prose throughout this work as well as the content. The oscillation between authoritative and reflective perspectives are my waves across the ethnographic page.

Historically, anthropologists have not only associated tourism with commodification, cultural and social change and movement, but with superficiality and inauthenticity. Some anthropologists have regarded tourism as at best an irrelevance and at worst a malevolent force that corrupts cultures. But anthropologists researching tourism must rather see it as the lived experiences of most peoples - either as tourists and/or as peoples to whom tourists visit. Like it or not, tourism is a key contemporary conduit for the tangled business of cross-cultural interaction.

My interest in the experiential aspects of tourism is longstanding. In 1996 I conducted research considering young Pakeha¹ New Zealanders’ reflections on working holidays overseas. With this current ethnographic project I sought to develop an inquiry that would encompass the subjectivities of both tourists and peoples from the places tourists visited. Taking an interpretive approach towards both culture and tourism I chose to prioritise the relationship between local people working within the tourism industry and tourists. I sought to explore issues of how communities aim to represent their identities through tourism, and

¹ Pakeha is the Māori word for peoples of European heritage.
in turn, how such identities are interpreted by tourists. With tourism as a focus I posed deeper questions about identity, relationships to place, cultural performance and issues of representation for both those engaged with tourism as work and as leisure. I was enthralled by the performative and dialogical potential of tourism as simultaneously experience and representation.

Committed to anthropology located in and connected to my home (New Zealand) I developed a research proposal that formulated questions about the relationship of New Zealanders as tourists to places with which New Zealand has historical and political connections - South Pacific Island states. I was concerned with islands which were relatively new to tourism - that is, I was less interested in places that had become almost synonymous with Pacific tourism, such as Hawai‘i or Tahiti.

As I will outline in Chapter Two, the Cook Islands, have a longstanding and continuing historical and political relationship to New Zealand. Their engagement with tourism is entangled with their assertion of self-government but maintenance of links with New Zealand. As Chapter One elucidates, my fieldwork in the Cook Islands was core to my inquiry, but this needed to be considered in past and present relationship to New Zealand. This necessitated fieldwork in both places.

As often happens once anthropologists begin fieldwork, the topic formulated in the initial research proposal expands. Although the New Zealand-Cook Islands connections were important, I realised that I needed to ask questions of other tourists’ experiences and imaginings of place. New Zealanders are no longer the dominant body of tourists holidaying there - surpassed in the last few years by a European market. I found myself caught between stories of tourists and of Cook Islanders and often asking myself where I was situated in relation to the perspectives I confronted. I needed to find a way of conveying these different experiences and representations but also of revealing that at times people were grappling with similar expressions for different reasons. I needed a way to represent my experiences and those of others.

Writing in waves

We live and write in and of our time but there are constraints and possibilities emanating from what and how we write, both past and present. While innovations in writing are made possible through the legacy of the bold works of previous writers, we are to some extent constrained by the historical and political contexts of our writing. Edward Bruner (1986) discusses the changing construction of narratives within ethnography. He compares the ethnographic tropes of the 1930s and 1970s with regard to Native American life. Ethnography in the 1930s narrated this as a story of ‘past glory, present disorganization, future assimilation’, 1970s ethnography rewrote this as ‘past oppression, present
resistance, future resurgence’ (1986: 143). Bruner does not compare these to unveil the ‘true’ story. He calls attention to the shifting emphasis of the anthropological storytellers and the role of the narrative. The lived experiences of Native Americans are of course more complex than discourse can convey.

Narrative structures organize and give meaning to experience, but there are always feelings and lived experience not fully encompassed by the dominant story (1986: 143).

Lived experience, Michael Jackson suggests,

overflow the boundaries of any one concept, any one person, or any one society. As such, it brings us to a dialectical view of life which emphasises the interplay rather than the identity of things ... Lived experience accommodates our shifting sense of ourselves as subjects and objects, as acting upon and being acted upon in the world, of living with and without certainty, of belonging and being estranged (1989: 2).

Jackson advocates the practice of an anthropology of experience that recognises anthropological understanding arises from the interaction between multiply positioned selves and multiply positioned others. Placing myself in this tradition I reject a notion of a neutrally positioned self, observing a statically positioned other. I want to stress here though that discourse itself is shaped by lived experience. Written discourse is the salient means through which we (anthropologists) communicate. We must acknowledge and take responsibility for its shortcomings as well as its strengths - it represents rather than reproduces lived experience. And we must find ways of expressing the connections between what we experience, what we write, and how we write about it. This position has a bearing on my own discourse throughout the ethnography, and here I use stories strategically to unravel my topic.

It is important that the reader grasps the style of this ethnography and its central thread. While the topic is situated within a body of literature known as the anthropology of tourism, the appeal of my project is not found purely within these parameters. My main concerns here are not the measurements of ‘outside forces’ on ‘inside dwellers’ as many anthropologists and other social researchers have sought to do. I am interested in the spaces in between - the lived experiences and representations of both tourists and local Cook Islanders, both as dwellers and travellers. To get at these lived experiences and representations I have foregrounded narrative.

I have tried in some ways to challenge a dominant storyline here. The story I have subverted is a well told tale by anthropologists and other social scientists researching tourism in developing countries - the impact of tourism on a culture. But in doing so of course I have chronicled another. My story is a story about interaction - of being mobile and being in place, of re-telling stories of a paradise
myth and times of darkness, of making new through revisiting the past and aspiring to be (post) modern. I have written narratives which have a bearing on the lived situation of tourism in the Cook Islands and how the representation of identity is grappled with by those engaged with the industry. Multi-faceted stories are the means through which relationships are created and played out between tourists and local people. These stories are told in brochures, by travel agencies, by other tourists, by writers of travel literature, popular media, by locals living in the destination place and by diasporic Islanders, and by the anthropologist/tourist - myself. Any tale is of course as much in the reading as it is in the telling and I have no doubt that there are many interpretations and other possible storylines along the way. But without giving too much of the tale away, let me at least indicate the path to come.

The first chapter navigates much of the way ahead for the ethnographer and the reader through a critical examination of the conception of the research project, subject, and methodology. It considers the stories told by anthropologists about the spaces we identify with and narrate - fields. Storytelling by anthropologists about their own practice has traditionally relied on authoring a single beginning (entrance) by a lone narrator into a dialogue between two bodies - us (western anthropologist) and them (native other), or a commentary by the former about the latter. Through narrating my own ambivalent entrances into the research and the various perspectives which required consideration alongside a representation solely of ‘us’ and ‘them’, I seek to emphasise the importance of stories and the way they are told to the production of ethnography. Anthropologists are in a sense the stories we tell about our practice - the ethnographies we write. Here I draw attention to the complexity of the context in which this storytelling occurs. There are various audiences and shifting meanings and agendas for what is told. This makes storytelling performance. Recall my earlier statement that I am trying to displace a story that relegates the native as passive recipient of colonial perpetrators. Tourism is the outcome of colonial processes but tourism is also a contemporary way of life.

In Chapter Two I consider the way in which the past is remembered and narrated in the creation and reinscription of contemporary identities. I juxtapose an authoritative narrative style detailing New Zealand’s colonial relationship to the Cook Islands, with the re-imagined pageantry of the opening of the international airport in Rarotonga and a final reflection of Cook Islanders themselves as tourists. Travelling from island to island and country to country and telling stories

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2 Throughout I follow Stuart Hall’s conception of identity/ies as ‘subject to the continuous ‘play’ of history, culture and power’ (1990: 225) Hall states that identities are ‘the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within, the narratives of the past’ (1990: 225). So identity is not an essence but a positioning. See Hall (1990, 1991, 1997) and Hall and Du Gay (1996).
about the past are, claims anthropologist Jukka Siikala, the ways that Cook Islands culture constitutes itself (1991). Siikala’s work considers the link between mythical time and present society as genealogical. Myths and histories, like historical monuments, tie the present state of society and culture to the previous one. Movement is a central motif throughout my ethnography. I endeavour to evoke a sense of fluidity with the telling of all stories and the juxtaposition of being in place with being on the move.

The significance of movement for storytelling by both Cook Islanders and tourists is emphasised through tales of travel in Chapter Three. In this chapter, as in Chapter One (where I argue against the fixed positions of anthropologists and also research subjects) the position of the storyteller is to be read both literally and figuratively. That is, storytellers change both in physical place (as narrated) and in their place within the stories (e.g. storyteller or subject) to undermine a taken for granted notion of authority and fixity. Chapter Three looks specifically at the potency derived from the act of telling stories on the move. There are diverse historical and cultural contexts giving rise to this mode of storytelling. Nonetheless, for both tourists and local Cook Islanders, narration of movement connects strongly to the storyteller’s identity.

In Chapter Four stories are elicited to understand more about how place is understood while on holiday. The tropical island weddings of tourists and their associated emphases on nature, time, romantic solitude and luxury reveal an interface between the narrations of lived experience and of tourism advertising. These stories of the aestheticisation of island as paradise rely on historical representations of others who gazed at the place and romanticised it, such as travel writer Beatrice Grimshaw. Embodied experience reinforces these visions. The idea of an island as a spiritual and physical paradise of abundance and freedom is articulated in many contemporary modes of representation by both

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3 In his study of Ngaputoru (the islands of 'Atiu, Ma'uke and Mitiaro in the Southern Cook Islands), Siikala claims that warriors and chiefs, through their travels, create differential political space which is hierarchically organised and expressed in genealogical terms. Siikala suggests that the dynamics of chiefly politics is formed by the complementary combination and reversal of the value of social units (evident in origin narratives) based on elder/younger, female beauty/male conqueror, and autochthonous/foreign. He argues, however, that the hierarchical position of the island societies in the total polity is determined by the combination of the paths and the births, travels and sexual values of the islands (Siikala, 1996: 51). Through his outline of the various ways in which genealogy has been, and continues to be, traced in Ngaputoru, and the connection between this and hierarchy, Siikala (1996) stresses the importance of place in the manifestation of precedence. This is especially evident in the duality of power - *mana 'enua* and *mana tangata* (*mana* meaning power, *'enua* meaning land, *tangata* meaning people). *Mana 'enua* (power over land) can only be used by a person with a legitimate path to an ancestor of that place, and so conquest alone does not bring *mana 'enua*. *Mana tangata* (power over people) can occur through marriage alliances to other islands. This is the power that 'Atiu chiefs held in Ngaputoru, and as such they were unable to alienate land from Ma'uke or Mitiaro.
Islanders and outsiders. This is not benign. Colonial notions of paradise are reinscribed on landscape and people.

The Cook Islands are considered an entity, geo-politically, but often what is meant when the term is used in general (and tourism) discourse is ‘Rarotonga - and the outer islands’. Specific places (islands or places on islands) are perceived as containing knowledge or power. Stories about these places are more than just a vehicle for information about these sites but also an important source of authenticity themselves. Chapter Five considers the stories told by outsiders and to outsiders about the outer islands as repositories of knowledge. These stories and their subsequent circulation affirm an authenticity of place but also an authenticity of the experiences and identities of the tourists who travel to the place and hear the stories.

The final chapter considers performance of stories as the means by which we constitute ourselves. Here I examine and discuss in more depth how stories are embodied to constitute a sense of collective selves. What is meant by performance? What does it mean to perform identity? For whom is identity performed? How, and for what reasons? Essentially dialogical, performance creates links between - between us and them, between here and there, between now and then. Performance is a means of getting at lived reality through embodied expression. After Dilthey’s hermeneutic approach.

Having indicated the ethnographic path I take in my particular study let me now shift tracks somewhat to consider the broader contexts of tourism as social practice and research focus.

**REVIEWING HORIZONS**

*A path of western tourism*

The immediate historical roots of tourism are found in early trading, medieval pilgrimages and the European ‘Grand Tour’ of the eighteenth and nineteenth

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4 After Dilthey’s hermeneutic approach.
centuries (Leiper, 1979; Shaw and Williams, 1995: 22). These, in particular the
Grand Tour, provided the geographical kernel from which the contemporary
globalised industry developed; expanding gradually from a tourist centre based in
Europe into other more ‘peripheral’ regions (Brodsky-Porges, 1981). The
establishment of the Grand Tour as an early tourist institution arose from the
view, developed in the Renaissance, that truth lay outside the mind and spirit
(Graburn, 1977: 24). Unlike the religious pilgrimages common in medieval
Europe, this was a quest for ‘truth’ manifest through the journeying itself.5
Graburn (ibid.) suggests that a re-examination of the scientific and historical
‘discoveries’ of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries laid the foundations for
modern tourism itself.

The Grand Tour took first the sons of European (typically English and to a lesser
extent French) aristocracy and gentry and, by the late eighteenth century, the sons
of the new professional middle classes, on a tour of the European continent. A
typical tour lasted for three years and tended to focus on Italy (particularly its art
and architecture) but also encompassed France and Germany (Trease, 1967: 12-
13). The motive for going abroad in search of ‘truth’ however, was not limited to
cultural education in art, music and language but also included the political
education of the eighteenth and nineteenth century English upper-middle classes.
Indeed, as Graburn suggests, ‘the tour was deemed a very necessary part of the
training of future political and administrative leaders’ (1989: 29).

The visualisation of the travel experience was aided and assisted by the growth of
guidebooks, such as Thomas Nugent’s The Grand Tour (1778), which promoted
new ways of seeing.6 The character of the tour shifted from that of the original
observation and recording of galleries, museums and what were considered to be
‘high cultural’ artifacts - ‘scholastic’ tourism - to the more ‘scenic’ tourism of the
nineteenth century. This was considered to be a subjective experience of beauty
and the sublime (Towner, 1985).7 The trope of scenic tourism is evident still,
although in the contemporary globalised tourism industry an assortment of
choices for tourist experience are represented. Experience is emphasised through
viewing and other sensory means. Contemporary guide books primarily
emphasise the visual, but also draw on other senses especially taste and smell to

5 It should be noted that Graburn sees important affinities between tourism and pilgrimage.
6 Judith Adler’s (1989a) article notes an historical shift in sensory codification of travel
conventions from one more dependent on the tongue and the ear to that of the eye. Her detailed
analysis of sightseeing from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century notes a change in style from
an eyewitness investigatory to a romantic mode of ‘wordless gazing, nocturnal dreaming, and
provisioning against sordid realities’ (1989a: 24).
7 I will consider romantic touristic experiences and the relationship of these to representations of
people and place (in particular land and sea scapes) in Chapter Four where wedding tourism in the
Cook Islands is discussed.
appeal to readers seeking a more holistic and implicitly more ‘real’ and ‘authentic’ travel experience. They frequently present photographs of food, clothing, and handicrafts as part of the package of holiday enticements.

Thomas Cook has been considered the founder of mass tourism. His European rail tours of the mid-nineteenth century opened up the chance for the middle classes to tour. By the turn of the twentieth century the working classes were tourists too. In Britain they holidayed at northern seaside resorts (such as Blackpool and Skegness) (Urry, 1990: 28). As travel became more democratized emphasis on where one holidayed in relation to others mattered more. Travel sights and styles became a statement of class, signifying one’s level of income, education and ability to indulge in the pursuit of expensive leisure.

But while proportionally more people could access the means to travel, the modes and characteristics of travelling did not alter dramatically until after World War II. Up until this time travel outside of European homes was primarily for reasons of trade, colonial business, or migration - very few did so purely as tourists. Those who did travel as tourists were regarded as adventurers and explorers bringing home exotic tales of beautiful and alluring, although often primitive and dangerous, places and peoples. Travellers’ narratives roused in those at home an interest in these far away places and further promoted the act of travel itself as a desirable pastime for education and extending one’s life experience.

Tourism to places outside of tourists’ homes in Europe, North America, and Australia and New Zealand took off from the 1960s and 1970s. Tourism was identified by developing countries’ governments and planners as an advantageous development option (promoted by western governments and foreign lending agencies such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund). A western interest in touring to less developed countries was cultivated through recourse to early romanticised images of travel writers but enhanced by the tourism industry’s promotional images of happy, healthy, carefree tourists frolicking in socially uninhibited beach contexts away from home. Technological advancements and the convenience of a globalised industry that offered cheap air travel, package tours, and hotel chains meant many could realise such dreams. A sense of familiarity was assured while exposing oneself to the exotic. Mass tourists became a culture in and of themselves, taking comfort in their own company on buses, resorts and in tour groups as they viewed and ‘experienced’ other places.

**Pacific Islands to Pacific destinations**

Tourism to the Pacific reflects this general pattern of a democratisation and globalisation of travel. An elite style of tourism within and to the Pacific began in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Honolulu’s Royal Hawaiian
Hotel, opened in 1872, catering for the leisurely pursuits of those living in British Pacific colonies and wealthy Californians. By the early 1900s Matson Lines (the precursor to the modern luxury cruises) and the Oceanic Steamship Company ran regular passenger services between the west coast of the United States and Hawai‘i. Fiji too began to be recognised as a destination for tropical sojourners. Suva’s Grand Pacific Hotel opened in 1914, and by the 1930s Fiji was receiving regular steamships bringing both supplies and visitors (Douglas and Douglas, 1996). A 1930 edition of the Pacific Island Monthly heralded Fiji a winter resort paradise for New Zealanders and Australians (Anon, 1930: 9, cited in Douglas and Douglas, 1996: 25).

Throughout the western Pacific from the turn of the nineteenth century, the islands of Melanesia were perceived and represented by travel writers, resident expatriates, and the shipping companies’ tourist publications as possessing scenic splendour and the chance to see ‘natives’ still living in a ‘primitive’ state (Douglas, 1996: 65). The prolific travel writer, Beatrice Grimshaw, exoticised and primitivised Melanesian peoples as violent, ill-witted, lazy and sensual with her prose designed to tantalise Australian and European readers. Burns Philip shipping services brought a few ‘adventurous’ tourists - mainly from Australia - to New Guinea, the New Hebrides and later the Solomon Islands. The combination of intermittent transportation with colonial racial values meant that holidaying in Melanesia did not attract the same appeal as the eastern Pacific Islands, long represented as more hospitable and sensual, and less dangerous because of health risks and the perceived state of ‘savagery’ (Lutz and Collins, 1993).

It not until after World War II, with its legacy of airfields in many of the occupied Pacific Islands, that other islands began to be considered tropical island holiday destinations. In the 1960s Guam, Tahiti, and to a lesser extent New Caledonia, experienced an influx of tourism traffic. Tahiti had of course long inspired images of paradise since eighteenth century explorers’ narrative accounts, paintings and etchings, later mass produced for a tourist audience in Hawai‘i. Although the 1960s and 1970s saw somewhat of a revival of ocean cruising through the Pacific region, the advent of jet travel made travel to the Pacific a viable option not just for the wealthy but for a mass market including those from further afield than the Pacific rim. Mass tourists took advantage of

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8 See Jocelyn Linnekin’s chapter ‘Consuming cultures: tourism and the commoditization of cultural identity in the island Pacific’ in Tourism, ethnicity, and the state in Asian and Pacific societies (1997) for discussion of the contemporary production and representation of paradise images, in particular Hawaiian warrior T-shirts. Linnekin finds that while much of this clothing depicting ‘tradition’ through images and slogans appeals primarily to local people, this appeal is shaped by a Euro-American tourist gaze interested in ‘naturalized ethnicity and objectified culture’ (1997: 216).
package tours as well as Pacific Island stopovers on long haul journeys, and assured a regular presence of outsiders to many Pacific Islands other than just Hawai‘i, Fiji and Tahiti. But tourism has remained less significant in economic terms to many Melanesian Pacific Island states, except for Vanuatu. The Pacific region consolidated a commitment to tourism as a region with the establishment of the Pacific Interim Travel Association in the 1950s, the Pacific Islands Development Council in 1976, and the Tourism Council of the South Pacific, funded by the European Community, in 1984.

South Pacific tourism presently accounts for only 0.15 percent of global international tourism arrivals (Hall, 1996: 1). In regional terms, however, it comprises a significant component of the economy, a major means of employment (Milne, 1992; Hall, 1994), and represents an important, although certainly an uneven, development option for Pacific Island micro-states faced with the economic constraints of small size and isolation. These ‘constraints’ of size and isolation are translated by the tourism industry into incentives for tourists who travel to Pacific Islands seeking the seemingly infinite resources of sun, sand and sea (Britton, 1987; Milne, 1990). Based on findings from its regular visitor surveys, the South Pacific Tourism Organisation (prior to 2001 known as the Tourism Council of the South Pacific) suggests that 50-80 percent of tourists to the region perceive the natural environment as one of the main attractions of the destination (Kudu, 1992 cited in Hall, 1996). Indeed, the Pacific is popularly and primarily known to outsiders for its alluring ‘nature’. This image of natural beauty and tranquillity saturates all islands within the Pacific, especially those with viable tourism industries.

The emergence of tourism as an anthropological research focus

Tourism received little attention until the post-World War II period when tourism’s expansion provoked some spirited critiques from such writers as Boorstin (1964), Young (1973) and Turner and Ash (1975). These critical writings portrayed tourists as superficial idiots who were easy to please and easy

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9 See Finney and Watson’s *A new kind of sugar* (1974) for a collection of case studies of Pacific Island states’ experiences during this consolidation of tourism in the Pacific region, and Farrell’s *Hawai‘i: the legend that sells* (1982) for an account of tourism development and impact in Hawai‘i.

10 Vanuatu’s economy since the late 1980s has become increasingly reliant on tourism development which remains, however, largely in foreign control (de Burlo, 1984, 1996; Milne, 1990; Hall, 1994).

11 See Jane Desmond’s *Staging tourism: bodies on display from Waikiki to Sea World* (1999) for a consideration of Hawaiian tourism’s treatment of ‘nature’ and ‘culture’, and my discussion of this in the epilogue. It should be noted that the effect of this ‘natural paradise’ meta-image for tourism in Fiji, Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands is threatened by political instability and violence.
to cheat. Turner and Ash’s (1975) *The golden hordes* was the most extreme example of this derisive attitude toward tourists. Boorstin (1964), in particular, contrasted a negative image of tourists with the lost art of travel - giving rise to the romanticised notion of ‘the traveller of old’. He lamented the loss of the art of travel, an active practice involving risks to health and even life, to the commodity of tourism, an intrinsically passive ‘spectator sport’ (Boorstin, 1964: 84-5). This critical view of tourists was complemented by criticism of the effects of tourism on the host society.12

Anthropological tourism research was led by the North Americans. The first organised attempt by anthropologists to collectively discuss issues associated with tourism was a symposium of the Central States Anthropological Society held in Milwaukee in 1964. Theron Nunez’s (1964) ‘Authority versus anarchy: the impact of urban tourism on a rural milieu in Mexico’ was the only one of its papers to be published. His ‘Tourism, tradition, and acculturation. *Weekendismo* in a Mexican village’ (1963) was the first published anthropological study of tourism. In 1974 the inaugural anthropological conference on tourism, a national academic symposium, was held in conjunction with the Mexico City meetings of the American Anthropological Association (Smith, 1977). This conference acted as a catalyst for the emergence of the first edition of *Hosts and guests: the anthropology of tourism* (1977); the ‘pioneering work that legitimised the American [and arguably international anthropological] academic study of tourism’ (Smith, 1989: ix). Up until the 1980s, most anthropological tourism research was still incidental to, or a spin-off from, other research (Jafari, 1981: 326; Nash and Smith, 1991: 13). A few anthropologists, however, began to specialise in tourism research.

The first edition of *Hosts and guests* (1977) reveals that initial research interest in tourism was focused on culture contact and its influences. Tourists were assumed to be representatives from ‘developed’ societies, bringing influences that affected their hosts in a variety of ways. Consideration of tourism development by anthropologists has been predicated on pivotal investigations into the impact of the ‘first world’ upon the ‘third world’, such as Margaret Mead’s *New lives for old* (1956) and Eric Wolf’s *Europe and the people without history* (1982) (Nash and Smith, 1991: 13). Emanuel de Kadt’s *Tourism: passport to development* (1979) focused on culture contact and its implications for development. His approach was concerned with how best to maximise the benefits of mass tourism for host societies. Criticisms of this came from Nunez (1977), who deplored the

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‘cocacolatizacion’ of native peoples, and Greenwood (1977: 137), who wrote of the ‘tragic consequences’ of the Alarde, a Basque ritual commoditized by tourism. Greenwood states:

The anthropological perspective enables us to understand why the commoditization of local culture in the tourism industry is so fundamentally destructive and why the sale of ‘culture by the pound’, as it were, needs to be examined by everyone involved in tourism (1977: 131).

Nash and Smith (1991: 13) suggest that such anthropologists were beginning to conceive of the tourist as an agent, not unlike the conqueror, government or missionary. Nash states,

The tourist … is seen as the agent of contact between cultures and, directly or indirectly, the cause of change particularly in the less developed regions of the world (1989: 37).

Ensuwing research now suggests that there are positive and negative aspects associated with tourism, as seen from a ‘host’ society’s point of view. An example of this is Erik Cohen’s revised original negative assessment of the impact of tourism on upland Thai villages. Where in 1979 he regarded this as negative (see Cohen, 1979c), in 1989 he was more positive about the near future (Cohen, 1989). Indeed, Valene Smith’s preface to Hosts and guests (1989: x) concedes that research undertaken in the decade between that volume’s first and second editions indicates that tourism is not the major element of culture change in most societies. 14

**NAVIGATING NEW HORIZONS: RECONSIDERING TOURISM AND CULTURE**

Impact studies are important. But they are not the only stories to be told about people caught up in contexts of tourism. Unlike the approaches toward tourism taken by those anthropologists outlined above, I have resisted a necessarily easy delineation between tourism - as that which is coming in, and culture - as that which is here already. My understanding of the lived experiences of the people I met during fieldwork have not afforded me the position from which to make such a claim. I have considered multi-faceted stories as the means through which relationships are created and played out between tourists and local people. There is a complexity of contexts in which storytelling occurs. Rather than assuming that in tourism contexts stories are told to tourists purely for commercial

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13 Bryden, an economist, also supported this viewpoint (1973: 218). He concluded from his case study of tourism and development in the Commonwealth Caribbean that an economic case could be made against tourism development.

14 As Smith (1989: x) notes, to date no other comparative tourism study exists with time depth documentation by the same authors.
entertainment purposes I have regarded storytelling as a performance actively engaged in by both local peoples and by tourists themselves. Conceptualising stories within this broader performative frame allows for an understanding of embodied actions together with narrated words.

If myths and genealogies established relations of precedence in place for Cook Islanders, narratives are equally important in embodying myth for contemporary tourists. It is the contemporary realm of the ‘lived out’ with which I am interested in now considering stories in the Cook Islands. Like Jeff Sissons (1989) I see myths as products of subjectivity as well as structures for the reproduction of subjectivity.¹⁵

Bruner’s epilogue to the volume Creativity/Anthropology (1993) recaps the work’s two-fold aims: to see process as part of structure rather than the two in opposition and to see context as part of text (1993: 324). I see both of these challenges in the way I have conceived of the relationship between tourism and culture (and also the relationships between host and guest, self and other, and other dichotomies I will examine throughout the work). Like Bruner, I hope to show that

People construct culture as they go along and as they respond to life’s contingencies. No one denies the importance of rules and codes, but we will never understand how culture works, or how it changes, unless we take account of what culture is, ask how culture is achieved, produced and made believable (Bruner, 1993: 326).

Recalling Bruner’s verse with which I opened this prologue, and ethnography, culture is creative. Creativity denotes dynamism and the potential to respond but also to perform. I see a need to look at how people perform culture within a tourism context. Not just the putting on of a spectacular ‘show’ but the daily rhythm of being in amongst tourism - both the remarkable and the mundane aspects of culture.

Epeli Hau'ofa, considering Pacific histories told in a pre-post colonial frame, states,

[History (and here I would add ethnography) told in this way] ... marginalises our peoples by relegating them to the roles of spectators and objects of transformation into good Christians, democrats, bureaucrats, commercial producers, cheap labourers, and the like. It does not see them as major players in the shaping of their own histories. The main actors are explorers, early traders, missionaries, planters, colonial officials and regimes, and so forth (2000: 456. My emphasis).

Anthropologists studying the dynamics of tourism contexts have often framed interactions between tourists and the peoples of the places tourists visit as a

¹⁵ Sissons draws on Jonathon Friedman’s (1987) contention that structure is embedded in lived experience and the identities of subjects. Myth is a mobilising device and intrinsically subjective.
dichotomy of hosts and guests. This dichotomy arose out of an early anthropology of tourism, which concerned itself with culture contact and explicitly culture change (Nash and Smith, 1991). These host/guest studies usually privilege the perspective of either the hosts or the guests. Typically, with regard to tourism, the anthropological gaze has focused on the impact of guests on hosts. I problematise the host/guest formula for its tendency to render the encounter of tourists and locals into an equation between the giver and the receiver. Such a dichotomy obscures the complex interactions premised on layers of colonial experience and cross-cultural encounters (this is examined further in Chapter Six).

Abram, Walden and Macleod’s edited volume Tourists and tourism: identifying with people and places (1997) presents a significant contribution to anthropological considerations of tourism relations in its analyses of the notions and expectations of tourists and peoples of the places tourists visit. Importantly, its contributing authors regard identity as dynamic and changing for all involved in such tourism encounters. Their volume challenges who tourists are and who hosts are. Hosts can be tourists too.

When so many of the people once thought to be ‘hosts’ now can be recognised as tourists in their own right (either as holiday-makers or as individuals engaged in the postmodern consciousness of the instability of ‘identity’), we must reconcile ourselves to the awareness that we (as travellers, tourists and writers) are part of the changing perspectives that are interacting to delineate new and different identities (Abram and Walden, 1997: 9).

Likewise, anthropologist Tom Selwyn (1994) has criticised the rigidity of the ‘host’/‘guest’ categories used by Smith (1977, 1989), arguing that hosts can be guests and vice versa.

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16 Other recent works posing broader and more complex inquiries into tourism include the following:

Michel Picard and Robert Wood’s edited volume Tourism, ethnicity and the state in Asian and Pacific societies (1997) presents a collection of analyses of tourism contexts that look a beyond normative cost-benefit frame to more broadly understand the interactions of tourism, ethnicity and the state.

Greg Ringer’s edited volume Destinations: cultural landscapes of tourism (1998) provides a cultural geographic consideration of tourism of as ‘place-centred and constructed’ (1998: 1) itself, and the dynamics involved with co-existing, and often colliding, concepts about place by local people and their visitors.

Richard Butler and Thomas Hinch’s edited volume Tourism and indigenous peoples (1996) both acknowledges and explores indigenous agency in its consideration of development options for indigenous peoples in tourism contexts. The case studies presented outline situations of varying degrees of control over decision-making and resources by indigenous groups. Importantly the volume recognizes the disparate experiences of indigenous peoples with tourism and the socio-political reasons for this (some authors make connections between present experiences and colonial histories).
Both may simultaneously be investors in, and consumers of, tourist services; and both belong to worlds which are at once traditional, modern and post-modern (Selwyn, 1994: 730).

Tamara Kohn's (1997) research on an inner Hebridean island off the west coast of Scotland reveals that a major 'impact' of tourism on the island has been the transformation of tourists into the 'host' community itself. Historically, she observes, tourism is only the latest industry to bring people to the Scottish Isles. Kohn suggests that divisions between islanders and newcomers while clearly defined, are often transcended over time as some regular tourists to the island slide along the 'incomer-islander continuum' to become islanders.

They were no longer on the island to imbibe the magic of the place; they were there because it had become their home and work place. They did not live a rustic myth of a leisured island life, but their lifestyle adapted to meet the lifestyle experienced of most other full-time residents... The flood of summer tourists that arrived each year saw them as islanders. They, in turn, saw the flood of strangers as 'bloody tourists' (Kohn, 1997: 22).

Julio Aramberri (2001) finds the host/guest theme altogether misleading, not just for the delineation assumed between the identities, but for the very grounds of the interaction between tourists and local peoples living in tourist destinations. This relationship, he states, is not based on reciprocity but rather, commercialism.

Further, Aramberri claims, the host/guest relationship - no longer in operation - is not abandoned but becomes idealised as a pattern that should be upheld and believed in to some extent by both 'hosts' and 'guests'. Implicit in his suggestion is that a sense of the romance (or perhaps 'nostalgia') of the encounter as one of host/guest is preserved as a veneer through which to sell the image of tourism as an inter-subjective experience between an 'individual' (the guest) and a 'community' (the host). I will explore this host/guest quandary further in a Cook Islands context. I want to suggest at this early stage that there are certainly variations in the dynamics of touristic encounters and to suggest that a generic pattern forms across tourism contexts is perhaps falling again into an original essentialising dichotomy that many of us oppose. Dealing with outsiders in tourism contexts does not necessarily mean recourse to a purely commercial etiquette.

In the introduction to her co-edited work International Tourism: identity and change (1995: 1, 5), Marie-Francoise Lanfant refutes the assumption that tourism and local society are in relations of exteriority. She insists on a more complex understanding of tourism, which she describes as
...a double edged sword. In certain cases it contributes toward repressing, marginalising and neutralising autonomous or resistance movements. In other cases it allows ethnic minorities that have been cut off from international decision-making to claim and assert their identities (Lanfant, 1995: 6)

In the same volume anthropologist Michel Picard (1995) stresses that the processes of touristification are complex and pervasive. Picard (1995) and Lanfant (1995) are committed to revealing a multiplicity of processes for affirming identity; processes which the development of tourism exacerbates (Lanfant, 1995: 7). Picard challenges the notion that tourism is just an external impact on a passive native society. Of the more specific corollary: has tourism helped to preserve the cultural heritage of Bali or to destroy it? he asks:

What is entailed by talk of the impact of tourism on Balinese culture? What concept of culture, of tourism and of the way tourism affects culture is implied by such a phrase?” (1995: 45).

Attempts by the industry to provide a solution to ‘the impact of tourism on culture’ have been to interpret the problem in terms of a trade-off between oppositional elements - economics versus culture, modernity versus tradition - to conceive of the problem as a balancing between exogenous and indigenous forces. This associates tourism with economics, and society with culture. Thus tourism brings cash in exchange for exploiting or appropriating culture. Interestingly, culture is assigned to tourist sites but not to tourists themselves. This is a view of tourism and culture framed by development but constructed by the tourist industry in their own expansive interests.

Picard (1995) suggests these loaded oppositions mask the workings of tourism. Touristification, he asserts, blurs the boundaries between the inside and the outside - between what is ‘ours’ and what is ‘theirs’, between that which belongs to a culture and that which belongs to tourism. Tourism is not outside culture at all but ‘inevitably bound up in an ongoing process of cultural invention’ (Picard, 1995: 47). His ethnography, Bali: cultural tourism and touristic culture (1996), addresses this articulation of tourism and culture in a place which has become a renowned destination for cultural tourism. Picard argues that tourism and cultural cannot be regarded as distinct in Bali - rather they exchange qualities, rendering Bali home to touristic culture.

With these dynamic and even vexing notions of both tourism and culture in mind I embarked on my research, and embark here on my ethnographic representation of this.
Chapter One

SITE-SEEING

Since fieldwork is increasingly the single constituent element of the anthropological tradition used to mark and police the boundaries of the discipline, it is impossible to rethink those boundaries or rework their contents without confronting the idea of the field. The field of anthropology and the field of fieldwork are thus politically and epistemologically intertwined; to think critically about one requires a readiness to question the other. (Gupta and Ferguson, 1997: 3)

Ethnographic fieldwork based on the participant-observation method institutionalised by Malinowski is generally considered central to what it means to be an anthropologist and do anthropology. Fieldwork is a trademark of the discipline and a necessary gateway (rite of passage even\(^1\)) through which young initiates must pass in order to be considered Real Anthropologists. Of course anthropologists have long been doing fieldwork differently to the age-old Malinowskian trope of a lone white male who departs into unknown territory, lives with and observes remote ‘natives’ for an extended period of time and returns home armed with wisdom to write up a piece for the record. Contemporary anthropologists rarely seek to tread in the footsteps of Founding Fathers as we embark on ethnographic fieldwork. Malinowski’s footprints have long ago been washed from the sands on Trobriand beaches and walked over in the hallowed halls of academia. Nonetheless, fieldwork defines the discipline and though we may tread differently in our fields, fields they remain.

Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson (1997: 5) observe that, through the anthropological lens, the world appears as an array of field sites. The process of production of an anthropological doctoral thesis exemplifies this disciplinary discourse. We speak of ‘choosing a field site’, ‘reading the literature’ pertaining to the field (related research of the geographic and theoretical areas), ‘going to the field’, ‘being in the field’, ‘returning from the field’, ‘writing up’ - phrases which define sequential anthropological identities. These evolving identities are contingent on clearly defined phases of field experiences. The lived experience of doing an anthropology doctorate is articulated as a path of sequential stages directed towards, passing through and moving beyond the field.

\(^1\) James Clifford (1986b) and Malcolm Crick (1982, 1985), among many others, have commented on fieldwork as rite of passage in the discipline. Joanne Passaro (1997), in discussing her multi-sited and positioned fieldwork among homeless people in New York City, criticises the assumption that anthropological fieldwork should involve undergoing physical hardship and risk for the young ethnographer who is then heroised in the discourse.
Viewing the world in terms of 'fields' and these fields as markers of our disciplinary identity has far-reaching epistemological implications. The field is most certainly anthropologist-maker and inherently therefore it is subject-maker (anthropology). While we espouse the latter as being the primary function of the field it is the former which ultimately determines the anthropological project. We employ field to position ourselves within the discipline (makers/masters of fields) and in relation to our subject (knowledge about what is in those fields). Moreover, as Dan Rose (1987: 121) has observed, the discourse of field is a discourse of power and control. The ethnographic inquiry we term in the field, while aiming to place its practitioners ...

... in the way of others... does so without giving up anything; there is no fundamental change in the ethnographer's culture back home as a result of the fieldstay. That is, the institutional organization of anthropology, the academic department, the university are not altered by the contact. The field remains contained.

I do not wish to suggest that anthropologists have been blind to our own processes of knowledge creation. During the 1960s - 1970s the reflexive movement in anthropology bequeathed a number of ethnographers who critically engaged in an honest style of writing about the trials and tribulations of their fieldwork, not just in diaries and memoirs but more consequentially within their ethnographies. Anthropological knowledge has been seen primarily as stemming from time spent harvesting data during fieldwork - and so it was what went on in the field which was brought into focus in these accounts. This consideration of epistemology, however, only went so far. While reflexive accounts of fieldwork carved inroads allowing the field to enter our texts in some ways, ultimately field and text have remained seemingly separate: fieldwork is practised in the place 'out there'; ethnography is written and theorised in the place 'back here'. This inscribes dichotomies of fact/theory and of observation/interpretation. Essentially, the field (as the term is used in mainstream anthropological discourse) continues to be considered mainly as non-text (and the text as non-

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2 The works of Napoleon Chagnon (1968) and Peggy Golde (1970) exemplify the early phase in this style of writing about fieldwork which, although it exposes flaws on the part of the anthropologist, ultimately celebrates the efficacy of the method and the fieldworker. Paul Rabinow's (1977), Jean-Paul Dumont's (1978), Vincent Crapanzano's (1980) and Marjorie Shostak's (1981) later reflexive works, focusing on the dialogical encounters in fieldwork, present more of an epistemologically driven critique. Clifford (1997a: 69-70) notes the chronic containment of reflexivity in diaries and memoirs, most memorable perhaps the posthumous publication of Malinowski's diary (1967).

3 Dan Rose (1993: 197) suggests that a more profound understanding is needed of the formation of ethnography as a form of life, and the subculture of ethnographic inquiry within university life.
field), as external and in a sense unconnected to home and academe, and as somehow fixed as a place in space and a moment in time.4

In considering and critiquing approaches to the divide between fact and theory I reflect on the use of experimental narrative ethnography. Reviewing the field and its possibilities can enable an anthropology which is not premised on fixity in either a spatial or temporal sense. Challenging essentialised notions of ‘field’ I embark on a narrated journey of remembering my imaginings of field (I, II and III). I acknowledge that my ‘present’ textual field is in dialogue with this remembering. Displacing the field - in the ways we practice it both in lived reality (in fieldwork) and reconstruct it as text (as fieldnotes, ‘writing up’ but ultimately always as rememberings) - can reveal multiple meanings for an anthropology committed to dialogical relations - not as dichotomised selves and others but, to use Donna Haraway’s (1988) term, as agents of ‘situated knowledges’.

NARRATING THE FIELD (I)

In planning my anthropological research I had envisaged spending much of my time on a tropical island in the South Pacific. Rarotonga, I had imagined, would be a crucial place to visit as I researched representations of people and place in the Cook Islands tourism industry. But I became aware of entering the field not as I navigated my way by canoe through a reef passage, across a lagoon and beached on golden sand, nor as I was escorted ashore and shown to my pandanus-thatched hut by a friendly villager who might later become a willing informant. It dawned on me that I was entering the field on my way to interview the woman who had sold me my twelve month return airline ticket to Rarotonga. My canoe (vaka5) was a public bus, the reef was Auckland’s central business district and the beach was Queen Street, turbulent in its mid-week, morning traffic. My thatched hut took the form of a busy travel agency on this bustling street.

This recreation of my early sense of the field is a dialogue between how I imagined and experienced it then, and how I remember it now. Fieldnotes, recorded interviews, remembered conversations and mental images from my

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4 Certainly I am not suggesting that writing does not occur in fieldwork. Roger Sanjek’s *Fieldnotes: the makings of anthropology* (1990) takes as its focus writing done in the field. But although writing as part of fieldwork is significant it is seen as the recording of data and not given the same public recognition as what is ‘written up’. There is greater emphasis placed on the pursuit of writing prior to and after fieldwork. The interrelationship of text and field will be discussed in more depth later in this chapter. Suffice to say for the moment that a sharp delineation of field and text is contested by experimental narrative ethnographers such as Dan Rose, Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, and Smadar Lavie among others.

5 *Vaka* is the Cook Islands Māori word for ocean going canoe. This is *waka* in New Zealand Māori.
encounters with New Zealand travel agents during November - December of 1997 converge as field is moulded into text.

A telephone is ringing as I enter the office. I close the door on the street noise and walk across the aquamarine carpet towards a row of armchairs. I check my watch - **9.25 A.M.** Five minutes early. Good. Last week, when I phoned, 'Nadine' had said “come at 9.30, it's not our busy time.” I sit by a metal stand neatly stacked with glossy brochures. There are four other people in the room: two navy-suited women sit behind desks. One talks to a women and a man in their twenties. She is showing one of the brochures to the pair who lean forward watching as she circles text on it with a pen. They nod and take the leaflet from her. The other navy-suited woman, partly hidden behind a desk, talks to a computer screen.

‘Yes, I will confirm that for you within the hour. Thank you for calling. Goodbye.’

She looks up at me, pushing a mouthpiece away from the front of her face.

‘Yes, how may I help you?’

Her question, like her smile, seems practised.

‘I’m Tina Jamieson, the anthropologist who phoned to make an appointment last week’.

As I speak I notice that she is wearing a brass badge pinned to her suit lapel proclaiming NADINE.

‘Yes, we can talk now. How long will it take?’

‘Do you have half an hour?’

She pauses. I wonder if I have made my first mistake as an ethnographer by failing to grasp what seems to be an emic concept of time here - its efficient and profit-generating use.

‘Let’s make a start anyway’

As Nadine replies, she glances quickly at the clock on the wall opposite.

**Displacing the field**

The view of field sites as *natural* places and even in some contexts *utopic* places is still pervasive in anthropological discourse (Gupta and Ferguson, 1997). It

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6 Emphasis on fields as natural places can be traced to a discourse of late nineteenth century field naturalists (Stocking, 1992; Kuklick, 1997). The functionalist tradition in British social anthropology, through which the participant-observation method of fieldwork was pioneered, was to an extent inspired by the sentiments of physical scientists such as zoologist A. C. Haddon who in 1890 called for 'detailed study of a single tribe or natural assemblage of people' (Kuklick, 1997: 50). The natural places of fields were assumed to contain societies which were understood in terms of scientific ways for knowing nature. Functionalism relied on a notion of an organic analogy which posited that societies, like organisms, maintained internal equilibrium over time but through a functional institutional integration (Kuper, 1983). The synthesis of natural
follows that an anthropology that locates difference externally reasons that if these places are ‘out there’ then it is natural for anthropologists to go to them. Like green meadows waiting to be strolled through, or lagoons waiting to be paddled across, field sites seem to exist in order to be researched. My field narrative writes against orthodox ways of seeing and writing field as place and field/place as the natural stamping ground of anthropologists. In narrating my anthropological research I recall my own site-seeing of ‘the field’ around specific but also arbitrary entry points. Entry points are commonly written as arrival scenes and have thus rendered a place as a field enabling the naturalised location of anthropologists in relation to their subjects. Writing a research entry point as an opening arrival scene to a specific place makes it appear natural for anthropologists to go to places which are assumed to be ‘fields’ and to assume research relationships with people dwelling in what have become ‘their (the anthropologist’s) fields’.

Raymond Firth’s famous opening passage from *We, the Tikopia* (1936) depicts his arrival to a field/place which literally comes out to get him and drags him in. Writing for an assumed Western anthropological audience, Firth’s evocation of ‘outsider going in’ drags the reader into the ethnography and vicariously into the remembered field. He begins:

In the cool of the early morning, just before sunrise, the bow of the *Southern Cross* headed towards the eastern horizon, on which a tiny dark blue outline was faintly visible. Slowly it grew into a rugged mountain mass, standing up sheer from the ocean; then as we approached within a few miles it revealed around its base a narrow ring of low, flat land, thick with vegetation. The sullen grey day with its lowering clouds strengthened my grim impression of a solitary peak, wild and stormy, upthrust in a waste of waters.

In an hour or so we were close inshore, and could see canoes coming round from the south, outside the reef, on which the tide was low. The outrigger-fitted craft drew near, the men in them bare to the waist, girdled with bark-cloth, large fans stuck in the backs of their belts, tortoise-shell rings or rolls of leaf in the ear-lobes and nose, bearded, and with long hair flowing loosely over their shoulders. Some plied the rough heavy paddles, some had finely plaited pandanus-leaf mats resting on the thwarts beside

('scientific') method and natural ('scientific') object of study assisted in the heralding of the discipline as a new human science.

A detailed critique of field as place is given by Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson in their introductory chapter to their edited work entitled *Anthropological locations: boundaries and grounds of a field science* (1997). The multi-locale work of Susan Harding (1987, 1990, 1994) and Karen McCarthy Brown (1991) directly confront a premise of field being a place.

I could equally as justifiably have chosen to mark episodes such as choosing my research topic, beginning language tuition, or receiving a research permit for the Cook Islands as field entry points.

I acknowledge here the work of Mary Louise Pratt (1986) on the relationship of ethnography to other writing genres such as travel writing.
them, some had large clubs or spears in their hands. The ship anchored on a short
cable in the open bay off the coral reef. Almost before the chain was down the natives
began to scramble aboard, coming over the side by any means that offered, shouting
fiercely to each other and to us in a tongue of which not a word was understood by the
Mota-speaking folk of the mission vessel. I wondered how such turbulent human
material could ever be induced to submit to scientific study (1936: 1-2).

This ethnographic arrival story is also a tale of exploration and a tale of travel and
is powerfully evocative of those other tropes of writing which characterise South
Seas literature. The ethnographer positions himself at an external entry point -
anchorage off the coral reef - at the dawn of a new day (and the dawn of new
understanding). Firth describes how he is taken ashore by ‘shouting’ ‘natives’
(sic). He muses about their suitability as scientific subjects, referring to them as
‘turbulent human material’. Indeed, Firth’s arrival narrative is effused with
‘turbulence’. We read of a ‘wild and stormy’ scene, the mountain peak ‘upthrust
in a waste of waters’, and Firth’s own slipping and wading efforts to get a
foothold on the foreign terrain. He is led ashore by chattering, ebullient and
sparsely-clothed natives, themselves an embodiment of the ethnographer’s field
as a visceral and natural place.

But if Firth’s arrival story conjures an image of the place and field as turbulent,
Malinowski’s arrival tale in his Argonauts of the Western Pacific (first published
in 1922) evokes a field which is a place of solitude. It is a place where an
anthropologist is marooned like a castaway on a beach (Pratt, 1986: 38). His
ethnography opens:

Imagine yourself suddenly set down surrounded by your gear, alone on a tropical
beach close to a native village while the launch or dingy which has brought you sails
away out of sight (Malinowski, 1961: 4).

Malinowski’s reader is addressed directly through the use of the second person
and invited to empathise with the anthropologist’s new place as one devoid of
things from home, except for what he has scattered on the beach alongside him. It

10 I refer here to such ‘tales’ as Captain James Cook’s journals of his voyages and the successive
writings about his journals, nineteenth century missionaries’ accounts of life in the Islands (in
particular the accounts of John Williams and William Wyatt Gill which were popularised as
books), and the adventure tales of writers such as Herman Melville and Robert Louis Stevenson
among others, who popularised and promoted the Pacific, in particular Polynesia, as paradise to a
European imagination. What I suggest here is that anthropological accounts must be seen
alongside other texts telling tales of Pacific peoples and places. See Rod Edmond’s (1997)
Representing the South Pacific: colonial discourses from Cook to Gauguin.

There is a growing literature concerned with historical and contemporary European imaginings
of the Pacific. Margaret Jolly’s (1997) ‘From Point Venus to Bali Ha’i’: eroticism and exoticism in
representations of the Pacific’ critically examines a wide frame of such representations including
material from the Cook voyages, the writings (many for a tourist readership) of independent
woman traveller Beatrice Grimshaw, and the musical and subsequent Hollywood film South
Pacific.
is a place occupied by an anthropologist without other intruders (missionaries and colonial officials are also omitted from the ethnography). The field is an empty place - it has to be discovered. In these very different arrival scenes both ethnographers invoke empathy, from the reader. They position themselves as heroic anthropologists in the text (Moore, 1994: 122). For the remainder of the text this relationship between author and reader shifts to one of greater distance as the ethnographer establishes his position as the authoritative author of the text and the subject. Further reflection or commentary on his relationship to his subject and his field is avoided. This narrative style is typical of what Marcus and Cushman (1982) first described as ‘realist ethnography’. Realist ethnography is broadly understood in reference to a set of literary conventions utilised by anthropologists in their ethnographies to represent the ‘reality’ of a whole world ‘as only one who has known it first hand can’ (Marcus and Cushman, 1982: 29).

It may seem unfair, even disrespectful, to single out the ethnographic arrival scenes of two of the discipline’s apical ancestors and accuse them of myopic vision and writing. Malinowski and Firth wrote in times when colonial presence in scientific projects was rarely questioned or at least the relationship between anthropology and colonialism was differently valued. Yet there is value in recalling their words because we have inherited their legacy in the ways in which we write our fields and ourselves. Ethnographic stories of entry into the field have typically minimised ways in which colonialism, imperialism, missionization, multinational capital, global cultural flows and travel all bind places together (Gupta and Ferguson, 1997: 13) and denied fields which are both between, and inclusive of, many places and spaces including the text itself.

In a contemporary world in which moving on is arguably as much a feature of lived experience as staying put, how relevant is it to position the field (and consequently home) as a place apart? Appadurai remarks:

As groups migrate, regroup in new locations, reconstruct their histories, and reconfigure their ethnic “projects”, the ethno in ethnography takes on a slippery, nonlocalized quality, to which the descriptive practices of anthropology will have to respond. The landscapes of group identity - the ethnoscapes - around the world are no longer familiar anthropological objects, insofar as groups are no longer tightly territorialisatied, spatially bounded, historically self-conscious, or culturally homogenous (1991: 191).

Appadurai asserts that a shift has occurred in the constitution and location of ethnic groups. He implies that in recognising this increase in diversity and

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11 Clifford and Marcus (1986) and Van Maanen (1988) further contributed to the critique of ethnographic realism.

12 See George Stocking (1992) for an historical consideration of anthropology and ethnographic practice.
movement that we should practise and write fields more fluidly. However, what if groups were never really fixed back then? What if anthropologists' have made them so with the conception of field as place fixed in time and reinforced in ethnographic writing? To what extent do we perpetuate this false assumption by seeking out bounded places to go to - the village, the island, the town, localised sites? Embedded in this them and us practice of spatialised discourse is a sense of the purity or 'authenticity' of each field site as a site of knowing. How far away is a site from that sense of 'home', the inverse of exotic qualities? How remote, how village-like, how rural and therefore uncontaminated by the West and modernity? Essentially, how native are our field sites?

Confluent with my censure of this spatialised view of field as bordered and patrolled, Epeli Hau'ofa (1994) challenges a perduring colonial gaze on the peoples of Oceania as abject, remote, island-bound and subsequently perpetually dependent. Hau'ofa writes,

A realisation of the fact that the ocean is uncontainable and pays no respect to territoriality should spur us to advance the notion, based on physical reality and practices that date back to the initial settlements of Oceania, that the sea must remain open to all of us. (Hau'ofa, 1994: 406)

What if we imagine field as ocean, in Hau'ofa's sense, as expansive and dynamic and so able to encompass the multiple navigations of epistemology?

Clifford (1997a: 69), drawing on the work of Bourdieu, advocates conceiving of the field as habitus rather than place. If we consider the field in such a way, as a cluster of embodied dispositions and practices, then we can begin to reconceive the field and diversify the range of acceptable routes and practices we might ascribe to it, and how we might write about fieldwork.

I turn again to my own narrative of entering the field. In focusing on representations of peoples and places through the Cook Islands tourism industry, I embraced both a spatial and temporal sense of movement. Regarding the field as a fixed place obfuscates movement - which is crucial to the lived experiences of both tourists and Cook Islanders. Subsequently, in planning my research and embarking on fieldwork I followed presentations of tourism, and the movements

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13 Inverted commas are used here to indicate the contentious meaning of the term 'authentic'. It should be read as such throughout the ethnography.

14 Recent epistemological debates motivated by feminist ethnographers such as Kamala Visweswaran (1994: 95–130) have challenged the anthropological fieldwork premise of spatial separation of field from home. Visweswaran commits to homework not fieldwork. More broadly, repatriated anthropology critiques anthropology's tendency to disengage with a politics of home through studies of the exotic. See also the work of Deborah D'Amico Samuels (1991), Lila Abu-Lughod (1991), and also Angela Cheater (1986) and Anne Salmond (1986); two New Zealand anthropologists writing about doing 'anthropology at home'.

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of subjects - the paths taken by tourists to and in their holiday destination (Marcus, 1995). It proved difficult to trace the same tourists throughout their vacation and on return to their homes. Therefore I adapted my approach to ask them to recount their impressions prior to their arrival in the Cooks and then to imagine their return home. I acknowledge that this has ramifications for what I can know. While I may not have ‘been there’ during certain tourists’ experiences on holiday I was able to focus on holiday narratives which are told after the experience, and was better positioned to consider tourists’ representations of their experiences. I approached and received permission from the proprietors of several accommodation places on Rarotonga, to ask guests for interviews. I also approached tourists on a popular stretch of beach on the island. Other encounters with tourists were less formal and planned - on tours, shopping, and on the bus. I conducted about sixty interviews with tourists based on an outline of questions around themes of imagined impressions and experiences of people and place on holiday in the Cook Islands. Like the experience of tourists - my field was also at times transient comprising short acquaintances.

My fieldwork began with travel agents in New Zealand, as they are often the first points of contact for potential tourists. They act as mediators and representers of places and peoples. In visiting travel agencies I had several purposes: to learn more about travel agents’ perspectives, particularly what they thought it was important to say to others (clients) in their role as agents, to position myself alongside my research subjects, and to seek information as a tourist myself, about to undertake a journey to the Cook Islands.

NARRATING THE FIELD (II)

Since 1974 Rarotonga International Airport has been the focal point for the traffic of people and goods to and from the Cook Islands. The vaka that bore me and my partner, Paul to the field was an Air New Zealand 747 loaded with a host of Cook Islanders, a few missionaries, hundreds of tourists, and several others arriving for various reasons.

We are seated in the middle row of the plane. It is late at night but all is far from quiet. Behind me a group of men in their twenties laugh and talk excitedly. I watched them as we boarded the plane squeezing chillybins under the seats and into the overhead lockers. The smell of fried food circulates through the air-conditioning system and is dispersed through the cabin. Across the aisle a baby cries but is jostled into smiles on the knee of an elderly woman

15 This mode draws on two general approaches referred to in Marcus' (1995) article *Ethnography in/of the world system: the emergence of multi-sited ethnography*; following the discourse and following the people.

16 Subsequent chapters will discuss further key themes that are signalled in this narrative. These are: subjectivity with regard to travel agents, production of places as destinations, and the relationship of time to place through the tourism industry’s hegemonic discourse.
in a bright floral dress. Her greying hair is twisted tightly into a bun and secured into place with chopsticks. Two seats across from us sit a man and a woman dressed in the conservative style of the 1950s. They speak quietly to each other with American accents. The woman, wearing a white blouse buttoned to the neck, a long navy skirt and cardigan, knits fastidiously; her needles flashing and clicking. Beside her the man, in a necktie, writes. He pauses only momentarily in his writing, to refer to a black book opened beside him on the foldout cabin meal table. I see he has written several pages.

Watching the missionary write makes me nervous. (Having seen many missionaries now I know that he must have been one. At the time I wondered, but felt unable to ask him if that was what he was). I think about my task of taking fieldnotes for a year. When should I begin? Now? But it is the middle of the night. I am tired. Surely I can sleep now? But maybe I should be taking notes now. This man is and he’s not even an anthropologist. After all I am in the field now. Surely if there was a time to begin taking notes, this would be it. But it is the middle of the night. My mind churns over and over. Finally I strike a compromise. I resolve to rest and not to take notes, but to remain vigilant.

The writing, knitting, laughing, jostling and watching continue.

And then out of the window in the blackness I see tiny twinkling lights. I peer at the scene framed in the double-glazed plane window. Where are the mountains, the valleys, the reef? I turn to Paul.

Do you think that’s Rarotonga?

I guess so.

The plane banks and the pinpoint lights disappear. The undercarriage wheels come down with a clunk. The plane descends steeply and moments later a sudden lurching and screech of tyres signals our touch down. The vessel shudders as it is brought to an abrupt halt. I let go of the seat arm with relief. I hate landings. Cabin lights flicker back on and an intercom announces that it is 3 A.M. in Rarotonga.

Disembarking we step onto warm tarmac. In the dark I search for clues about this new place as I breathe in moist air. It smells of flowers, airline fuel and burnt rubber. Across the tarmac we shuffle in a queue towards a doorway marked Arrivals. Amplified strains of ukulele music grow louder as we near the building and I think of piped muzak in supermarkets and elevators - music for the masses trapped in confined spaces. But already I have misjudged the greeting, for passing through the Arrivals doorway I see an elderly man singing and strumming a ukulele. His eyes crinkle as he smiles. I remind myself to push my cynicism to one side.

Bill, the owner of a backpacker hostel is now squeezing us into a doorless, rusted out van. He picks up my printer and tosses it into the back on top of our packs. I feel myself cringing but I smile and thank him. Bill mutters to us and then is gone.

What did he say?
He wants to try to get some more backpackers.

I look out of the grimy van window at a group of holiday-makers queuing in front of a bus labelled Raro Tours. They are adorned with necklaces of lush flower 'ei. I envy the attention bestowed upon them, albeit all in the name of tourism. Had I been an anthropologist arriving thirty years ago - not amidst a planeload of other people with their own agendas - would I have been fussed over too? In my arrival as anthropologist I feel unnoticed, unheralded, and indistinguishable from the hordes. (Yet how could it have been otherwise given the political and historical context into which I flew and that I have chosen to study tourism?)

**Travelling fields, shifting identities**

So far, through consideration of a discourse of place, I have argued that there is an implicit ethnographic aversion to making fields of movement in time and space. This aversion allows for ethnographic stories of a single penetration into and subsequent knowledge of pure field sites of innocence. How might we reimagine fields as shifting? How might we write fields of transience rather than fixity, and can we consider our identity as anthropologist as fluctuating and multiple rather than necessarily unwavering and authoritative?

**Reimagined fields**

Movement into and out of the field becomes *fixed* in the telling. Indeed the setting for the ethnographic tale does just that - sets the tale at a place (and time\(^{17}\)) through an opening scene - typically the beach in Pacific ethnographies. This stages a naturalised illusion of field. The field is presented simultaneously as the context for knowing the anthropological subject - the entry to the field implying the temporal moment when this intellectual endeavour begins - and *the* place at which this happens. To conflate our knowing of the place and the place is to assert that there is a point on a map, reinscribed on a page. Revelation of place occurs in the assumption that readers 'go in' to the place in the text in the way that the ethnographer 'went in' to the place in the field - readers follow the ethnographers footprints. Telling orthodox tales of field entry binds ethnography to a unifocal vision - one story, one perspective, and one field.

If we reconceive fields as practised space - in Clifford's sense - we can think of fields rather as contexts through which we engage in anthropological practices. A field might include activities on a beach, in an airport, in a travel agency, but fields might also include a telephone conversation, a language lesson, an interview, the reading of a journal article, and most certainly the writing of an

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\(^{17}\) Ethnographic realism has been criticised for fixing time in ethnographies as essentially eternal, or 'standing still'. See Johannes Fabian's *Time and the other* (1983). I will return shortly to further consideration of time in ethnographic writing.
ethnography. Just as there are multiple practices of fields there are manifold points of entry, retellings and readings.

Historian Greg Dening (1980, 1992, 1996, 1998) unfixes the field through his treatment of the beach. Dening’s beach denotes cross-cultural encounters - the translations and transformations implicit in negotiations between selves and others. His emphasis is on telling tales of that space of betweenness and intersubjectivity. He writes,

The beach is always a mirror to oneself. On a beach the reflections of self are as if in a crazy mirror, distorted, caricatured (Dening, 1998: 163).

Stories from ‘the field’ are more intersubjective than we often credit them to be. They comment on the relationship between anthropologist and subject. I could have chosen to ‘enter’ the field and to witness this field entry at many points as I engaged with this project - deliberating over topics, learning Māori, writing the research proposal, the fieldwork budget, the grant proposal. Determining, firstly, not to reify field as only a place, nor to assume that a single ‘arrival’ would suffice, I have resolved to plot an ethnographic course that recounts some of my imaginings of ‘the field’. I tell this in a way that I hope resonates with the experiences of some of the subjects of my inquiry - tourists and Cook Islanders (though tourists and Cook Islanders are certainly not mutually exclusive groups).

My telling creates a feeling of moving along a journey in time and also in gaining knowledge. This might suggest there is a chronology of events to be understood in sequential order from beginning to end. By narrating the field through the stories of my encounters in the travel agency, airport, and tour I inscribe the well-trodden path of the tourist. Of course this is not unusual and many an anthropologist ‘going to the field’ will, unwittingly or otherwise, find themselves doing these very things. These events appear as incidental moments along the way - yet not the ‘real anthropology’. But in choosing which of any number of incidental moments in the field to tell we mark our field boundaries and circumscribe our ethnographies. The path of the tourist and of the anthropologist (and arguably missionary, politician, aid worker, teacher...) is always a story of getting there but also a process of acquiring and utilising a vision of what and where there is.

**Framed fields**

Fields are framed by both the questions we pose through our positioned knowledge and the selves we bring to them. Envisioning the island from afar and above as bordered within the plane window at night, I struggled with efforts to resolve what I viewed and what, in my mind’s eye, I had brought to this viewing. It was a struggle of thinking about parts and wholes.
Partly, I did not want to believe that Rarotonga could seem to present itself in this fleeting shape through a porthole after all I had endeavoured to know of it prior to arriving there. Yet, when looking at Rarotonga that first time I saw the island as surely so many foreigners had - as tiny, surrounded by nothing, and external to me. I had never wanted or believed in obtaining a (w)holistic vision or knowledge of the Rarotonga or Cook Islands, but ethnographies espouse a desire for an all-encompassing knowledge.

In his essay and introduction to *Writing culture* (1986), 'Partial truths', Clifford purports that there is no whole to know, much less a vantage point from which we might strive to know it.

A conceptual shift, tectonic in its implications, has taken place. We ground things, now, on a moving earth. There is no longer any place of overview (mountaintop) from which to map human ways of life, no Archimedian point from which to represent the world. Mountains are in constant motion. So are islands: for one cannot occupy, unambiguously, a bounded cultural world from which to journey out and analyze other cultures (Clifford, 1986a: 22).

But, even so, for a split second I was poised with Firth as he peered at his faintly visible dark blue outline on the horizon. And for a split second it seemed that the island and the field lay encased in a double glazed porthole.

Islands do move. Pre-colonial navigation across the Pacific was premised on a vision of a fixed *vaka* and islands moving past this steady point (Finney, 1976, 1994; Ward, 1999). *Te Moana Nui o Kiva* was indeed an ocean of movement comprised not just of fragments of land scattered in the sea but the surrounding ocean as far as it could be traversed, including the heavens and the underworld (Hau'ofa, 1994: 152). The island, *te 'enua*, accommodates more than what the eye can see, more than a view of physicality - it implies also the people and the connection of the people to land. The peoples and places of Oceania continue to embody movement. The circulation of Oceanic peoples to the metropolitan centres of New Zealand, Australia, the United States and Canada, post-World War II and the continued traffic between these places and 'home' is testimony to this (Hau'ofa, 1994: 155).

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18 The pre-fieldwork period (the initial time prescribed for all anthropology doctoral students at the Australian National University) had involved reading history, politics, and anthropology of the Cook Islands and Pacific, as well as familiarising myself with the context through Cook Islands newspapers, learning and practising Māori language with a Rarotongan student at the university, presenting a paper to an advisory panel and the anthropology program, and then undertaking preliminary fieldwork interviews and visits to the archives in New Zealand.

19 The word *'enua* although generally referring to 'land' or 'island' is taken to mean more than land in the physical and geographical sense but also implies the relationship of people to the land, land being never separated from its people and its people being never separated from their land. *'Enua* also means 'placenta' – which is traditionally returned to the land (buried) after birth.
The sea of islands is perhaps comparable to Clifford’s reconception of field as embodied spatial practice of dwelling and moving. In the disciplinary idealisation of the field, spatial practices of moving to and from, in and out, passing through, have tended to be subsumed by those of dwelling: rapport, initiation, familiarity (Clifford, 1997a: 67). Fields have been envisaged and written as clear spaces of focused and uncluttered disciplined action.

But anthropologists - like Malinowski on his empty beach - have cleared these spaces from the bustle and contradictions, the ebbs and flows of life. Movement has been written out as if it were mess that might distract from the task of locating knowledge ‘on the ground’. We might wonder where this left the people of Omarkana village who must have been watching in amazement as Malinowski stepped from the boat onto their shore with his belongings. Cleared from the opening page of the ethnography, their early presence relegated perhaps to an entry in the fateful diary (which would not be published until after the ethnographer’s death), the native people to the ethnographer might have represented turbulence and disarray. Their native view not yet attained and interpreted in the scientific process, the ethnographer opts to deny their presence altogether. Throughout Argonauts Malinowski made little reference to individual interlocutors’ subjectivities, favouring an emphasis on categorising individual statements as ‘typical utterances ... of native mentality’ (Malinowski, 1922: 24).

Indeed, Michael Young makes the critical observation that

all too often he [Malinowski] brought Trobriand Man to life only to parade him as the embodiment of a theory, and finally to kill him off as a pastiche of his own ideas (1979: 10).

Fields, islands and texts are messy spaces. There is action, there is movement, there is turbulence, and transience as well as calm, solitude, and stationary dwelling. We need to write these contradictions back into ethnography. There is more than what an ethnographer can tell and can know.

**FLUCTUATING IDENTITIES**

*Where is the ‘I’ in ethnography?*

Despite, or perhaps more critically because of our claim that fieldwork (and implicitly, the field) is a central, and even defining, feature of our discipline, we fail to consider its constructed-ness in our anthropological practice and our ethnographic writing. We negotiate ways into situations which allow us access to knowledge, yet we talk and write about the field as if it is natural. A consideration of the field as constructed does not negate our lived experiences in places we go to for the purposes of our research, nor of the people with whom we form relationships during our research. How do we position ourselves in the field
of anthropology and importantly and intrinsically within the field of the text? To answer this we need to think about how we author our fields?

So far I have talked about fields being elusive spaces - slippery, multiple, and moving, not really just places, not really the scenes in the opening pages of ethnographies, but the complex contexts through which we engage with our research projects. Given this premise so much depends on what the ethnographer chooses to make of her field, and where and how she places herself in field and text. In evoking imagination I accentuate the creative and political agency the ethnographic researcher wields in her conception of field. In conceiving of the field she deliberates its possibilities. She assigns to the field certain characteristics - place, people, and events, and prescribes a fragment of time (fieldwork) during which these elements are significant for her. It is a realm she imagines. Indeed, anthropological knowledge, and fields, seen in this sense, are inherently autobiographical.

Kevin Dwyer (1977; 1979) and Malcolm Crick (1976; 1982), among others, made early claims that anthropological knowledge concerns the mutual definition of the self and the other. Dwyer sought to challenge the complete authority of the ethnographer by presenting a literal record of the interviews with his key informant. He positioned ethnography in a process of dialogue between informant and ethnographer and emphasised the contingent and even vulnerable position of the ethnographer. Vincent Crapanzano’s Tuhami: portrait of a Moroccan (1980) was a pivotal experimental ethnography of the time which further resisted a monophonic and disembodied text with the author evacuated. These works can be read as autobiographical in that they rejected an easy delineation between the self as observer and author and the other as observed and written about. Significantly, they muddied the apparently clear, but illusory, boundaries between anthropologist as writer and as subject. The anthropologist was now also in the picture.

Clifford’s and Marcus’ edited volume Writing culture (1986) drew attention to anthropological self-consciousness. The politics, epistemology and practice of producing anthropology were called into question and debates ignited over what has been termed the ‘crisis of representation’ in anthropology. The ‘crisis’ acknowledged and delineated some of the implications of anthropologists’ claim to knowledge about other cultures. And it challenged us to consider and to write about these implications for those researched, for anthropologists, and for anthropology itself. Importantly, it rejected an anthropology premised on ethnographic realism and textual authority of the ethnographer. The very craft of ethnography - writing - was brought to light. On the front cover of Writing culture, Steven Tyler is pictured, back to his ‘others’, bent in his task of writing notes ‘in the field’. This image brings this formerly unseen activity to the fore. It
affirms the centrality of writing to the ethnographic project. But it is an image that foreshadowed the criticism of the volume to come from feminists. For it is also indicative of the trope of solo, white, male observer - anthropology's age-old proclivity.

Behar and Gordon's edited collection *Women writing culture* (1995) responded to Clifford's comment in his introduction to *Writing culture* (1986) that feminist ethnography

has not produced either unconventional forms of writing or a developed reflection on ethnographic textuality (Clifford, 1986a: 21).

Behar and Gordon (1995) claimed that Clifford and Marcus (1986) had done what anthropology has done all along - ignored women's scholarship. Further to the omission of contemporary writing of women ethnographers, a legacy of work by previous generations of women had been overlooked. Feminist anthropologists argue that the anthropologist was there in the text long before the trend in reflexive anthropology rendered her visible. Earlier generations of women ethnographers had indeed produced experimental texts which had been dismissed by the discipline as travel stories, personal accounts or novels because of their use of the very textual strategies the contributors to Clifford and Marcus' volume were promoting. Elsie Clews Parsons' innovative writing declared anthropology an intersubjective pursuit. This was especially evident in her work during the 1920s and 1930s, such as *Mitla, town of the souls and other Zapoteco-speaking Pueblos of Oaxaca, Mexico* (1936). Ruth Benedict, Margaret Mead, Zora Neale Hurston and Ella Cara Deloria, all former students of Franz Boas, all demonstrated frustration with an impersonal voice in their texts (Behar and Gordon, 1995: 17-20).

It is outside of the scope of my inquiry to discuss the many disparities between feminism and anthropology. At the juncture of concerns about ethnography for both feminist and postmodernist ethnographers is the identity of both the research subjects and anthropologist (in both field and text), and subsequently the authority of the ethnographer in the research (field and text). Indeed, recent feminist ethnographies Ruth Behar's *Translated woman: crossing the border with Esperanza's story* (1993) and Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing's *In the realm of the diamond queen* (1993) offer textually innovative ways to negotiate ethnographic authority. I will looker more closely at these shortly.

Getting back to my claim that ethnography is inherently autobiographical, that like it or not, we are in our ethnographies, I want to examine my own questions of

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identity as an anthropologist embarking on my ethnography and my fieldwork. Of course none of us ever embody just one identity (such as, ‘anthropologist’) - our identities are a confluence of our many relationships to others.

Judith Okeley states that autobiography or reflexivity is viewed as threatening to the discipline because of its ‘explicit attack on positivism’. She writes

The reflexive I of the ethnographer subverts the idea of the observer as impersonal machine. The autobiographical insertion is different from the author’s authority: not simply ‘I was there’, but the self and category whom the others confronted, received and confided in. The people in the field relate to the ethnographer as both individual and cultural category, whether or not the ethnographer acknowledges this. Autobiographical accounts of fieldwork are not confined to self-understanding in a cultural vacuum. They show how others related to the anthropologist and convey the ethnographic context (Okeley, 1992: 24).

Lila Abu-Lughod (1991) refutes the generalising tropes of practising and writing anthropology which reinforce a hierarchical separation of self and other.

She states

The outsider self never simply stands outside. He or she is in definite relation with the other of the study ... what we call the outside is a position within a political-historical complex (Abu-Lughod, 1991: 141).

I agree with Abu-Lughod that to conceive of coming in from an outside place to this inside place perpetuates the problematic notion that there are neutral places from which we embark to go to studiable places and that the selves that occupy these places occupy these outsider/insider roles. We stand in various and changing relationships to each other.

Deborah D’Amico Samuels (1991) takes issue with anthropological interpretations of differences between self and other for the folks back home, without considering the power and political relationship of fieldworker to field. Questioning what ‘the field’ allows us to do and think, she writes

The mythology of the field allows for the contradictory assumption that ethnographers can suspend those aspects of their identity without which they would not be able to do research in the first place (1991: 72).

So, who are these various others and various selves?

Thinking of fieldwork as a process of research involving special and specialised relationships between people, rather than a place kept me connected to the aims of my research and the reasons for embarking on this project. I chose to do

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21 Abu-Lughod (1991) suggests that we write against a hierarchical separation between self and other through ethnographies of the particular.
research situated in a Pacific context because I felt committed to furthering knowledge of issues related to the region in which I lived. I designed a topic which would inquire into the contemporary social and cultural experiences of not just people ‘out there’ - in the Cook Islands - where Paul and I lived as part of the fieldwork process - but also of people ‘back here’ in Australia and New Zealand - tourists and people working within the tourism industry.

Prior to my fieldwork I considered how I might be perceived by various people with whom I would come into contact throughout my research. I imagined that to many Cook Islanders I would be seen in these ways: a Papa‘ā, a woman, a New Zealander, a tourist, an anthropologist - not necessarily in this order. To travel agents in New Zealand with whom I had contact I imagined primarily I was seen as a student/researcher. To tourists, especially for those from Europe and America, I was also student/researcher, and a source of information (akin to a tour guide perhaps) for them about the Cook Islands and New Zealand.

Thinking of fieldwork as part of a process, rather than an episode outside of ordinary life reminded me that the decision-making about the fieldwork was not separated out from the rest of my life. Applications for scholarships and funding, supervision, and topics are decisions involving an individual and her family. They are not free choices but involve both opportunities and constraints. The decision that my partner, Paul, would come with me to Rarotonga for that part of the fieldwork was part of the decision we made at the outset of the PhD process, when we decided to move from our home in Palmerston North, New Zealand to Canberra, Australia. So, I was not so much, this Papa‘ā woman researcher in the Cooks, but seen as part of a couple. This was the common status for a Cook Islands woman in her early thirties, although the fact that we were not married and did not have children was a point of bewilderment for many - this was often commented on with either pity or resignation that Papa‘ā are not so family orientated.

The word Papa‘ā (four layers) dates back to encounters with missionaries who were seen to wear many layers of clothing. It has, since the nineteenth century when Cook Islanders began to be in regular contact with non-Pacific Islanders, taken on the meaning of a general other to Pacific Islanders, Europeans being the only perceived others at this time. However, Papa‘ā is now generally used to refer only to white (of Euro-American heritage) people. Being a Papa‘ā in the Cook Islands connected me to the other Papa‘ā on the island at the time and also to the historical context through which Papa‘ā and Cook Islanders interact. As a Papa‘ā it was not surprising that I was there. There is a small expatriate population in the Cooks – 5 percent of the resident population in 1996 (Cook Islands census, 1996: 13). Each year there is a flow of transient aid workers, doctors, researchers, teachers, lawyers and missionaries there for one to two
years’ work, and then the ever present influx of tourists coming and going all year round. As I have indicated in Narrating the field (II), Paul and I arrived alongside several other Papa’ā. In many ways this made me just one more Papa’ā, but in other ways, I was difficult to categorise as I was not quite the same.

Being a New Zealander made me a certain kind of Papa’ā. I have experiences of place in common with many Cook Islanders. We have lived in and travelled through the same parts of New Zealand. We have relatives living there currently. It is home in some senses. Parts of popular culture, politics and sport are accessible to New Zealanders and Cook Islanders. But there are aspects of New Zealand life which are unfamiliar to me also. I do not share the experiences of some Cook Islanders’ who live in hardship in areas like south Auckland, who live amongst enduring racism, who try to maintain a sense of identity in a country which has historically viewed Pacific Islanders in a rather negative light.

Being Papa’ā in the Cook Islands made me constantly aware of myself in relationship not just to Cook Islanders but to other Papa’ā. Like many anthropologists I was nervous about being mis-read and being identified with someone with a different agenda to myself. Tourists and missionaries were perhaps my initial concerns. I did not want people to see me as superficial, nor as someone passing moral judgement. I need not have worried. I realised that I was always going to be seen by some as a tourist or if not a tourist then some kind of tourist, and that if I thought there was some benign role that I could adopt I was dreaming!

Anthropologists, not just those who research tourism, know that everywhere we go we will encounter tourists or be mistaken for them by locals (Núñez, 1989: 270). Nash (1981: 461), in speculating about the late arrival of anthropologists to the study of tourism, suggests that it has been considered demeaning for anthropologists to be identified with a ‘frivolous activity or with people who look in a less authoritative way on other peoples’ ways’. This could partially explain the absence of ‘tourists’ and accounts of ‘touring’ in anthropological monographs but it has also been suggested that anthropologists may wish to dissociate themselves from other Western intruders, perhaps to maintain their own monopoly over the ‘exotic other’ (Pi-Sunyer, 1981: 278).

Yet, we cannot deny the blurred boundaries between what we do and what they do.

Early anthropological fieldwork, particularly that carried out by the French, was essentially ‘touring’. Large scientific expeditions including artists and scientists
travelled to observe and record the ways of ‘primitive’ peoples, gathering data on race, language, culture, and society.\textsuperscript{22}

Anthropologists Mascia-Lees and Sharpe (1994: 652) comment on this tentative relationship anthropology has with tourism;

Indeed, the construction of ethnography as science and as work helped distinguish it from other forms of cultural encounters, especially leisured travel and tourism. As the discipline has increasingly turned to self-critique, it has acknowledged that the differences between ethnographer and exhibitor, between anthropologist and missionary, between fieldworker and tourist have not been as absolute as we once liked to suppose.

The distinction between tourism and anthropology on the grounds of the one being about leisure and pleasure, and the other, work and science, has been a useful line for anthropologists to draw in the sand at times but not altogether safe from the inevitability of being washed away by other tide marks such as that drawn between tourists and travellers.\textsuperscript{23} For if not perhaps leisured tourists, then are anthropologists not more like industrious travellers?

In his chapter in the edited volume \textit{International tourism: identity and change} (1995) Edward Bruner emphasises the predicament of his own fluctuating identity. He was ethnographer, tour guide and tourist while travelling in Indonesia. He describes the uneasy oscillation between these simultaneous and overlapping roles and discourses.

... I could not always keep them straight. At times I experienced myself as pure tourist, gaping in awe at Borobodur, the magnificent eight-century Buddhist monument in central Java, and at other times I marshalled my reflexive acuity and carefully took notes on tourist behaviour. The same oscillation occurred in my photography. I took photographs of Borobodur that must have been indistinguishable from any tourist snapshot, but then I would turn my camera and photograph the tourists taking photographs of Borobodur. Was I a closet ethnographer on tour, or a closet tourist doing ethnography? (1995: 231).

It is not just the \textit{practices} of moving and observing but our shared social and historical contexts that have produced us (tourists and anthropologists) which make us similar and comparable. Malcolm Crick acknowledges tourists and anthropologists as ‘classificatory kin’. He notes

... tourists are relatives of a kind; they act like a cracked mirror in which we can see something of the social system which produces anthropologists as well as tourists.

\textsuperscript{22} W. H. Oswalt’s ‘The rise of ethnography’ in his \textit{Other peoples and other customs: world ethnography and its history} (1972) details these early anthropological tours.

\textsuperscript{23} See Malcolm Crick’s (1995) ‘Anthropologist as tourist: identity in question’ for an overview of the grounds on which differences between anthropologists and tourists have been asserted by the former, and a convincing argument for their similarity and overlap of behaviours and agendas.
More than that, tourists remind us of some of the contexts, motives, experiential ambiguities and rhetoric involved in being an anthropologist (1985: 78).

Further to this Crick, in a later reflection on the question of anthropological and tourist identity, suggests that an anthropologist researching tourism must accept her anthropologist/tourist identity and become part of the system of tourist-local relationships to learn about the system (1995: 217). From this position, Crick claims, the anthropologist then has no alternative but to be subjected to touristic rules and to all intents and purposes be a type of tourist (1995: 217).

Bruner maintains, however, that there are significant differences between tourists and ethnographers. Tourists, he states, stress the visual and ethnographers emphasise the verbal in encounters with ‘others’. And tourists surrender, allowing other people, such as tour guides, to mediate and even control experiences, while ethnographers struggle, accepting responsibility for their own actions (1995: 238). I find Bruner’s position rather typifying of both tourists and anthropologists. Don’t some tourists and some anthropologists gaze and talk, and have mediated experiences and surrender? Surely we must acknowledge that there are both differences and similarities in the ways tourists and anthropologists conceive of and behave in the world.

A recent article by anthropologist Vasiliki Galani-Moutafi (2000: 220) discusses similarities and differences between travel ethnography and tourism with reference to the lived experience of travel, the encounters and relationships of self to other, and the representation of self in travel discourse. He considers travellers, anthropologists and tourists all to be caught up in acts of gazing upon the elsewhere and the other in search of our own reflections. These searches for the self through the other, he states, have proven to be quests for imposition of control and order. But only (self-reflexive) ethnography, he argues, is conscious that the narratives we produce have a direct relationship to our identities and homes (2000: 222). Perhaps. My task is not to ponder the potential existence of self-reflexive tourism discourse or travel literature. The responsibility I take here is to acknowledge and write about the politics in being a tourist and in being an anthropologist.

I do not mean to overstate this. That is, I do not want to spell out where lines are drawn between the type of tourist I might be and the type of anthropologist. That would be a pointless and solipsistic exercise. But I ask the reader to read my ethnographic text as an aspect of my field. For I have tried to reflect the complexities of fieldwork identities through a text that does not take identity for granted. Neither mine, nor that of the various people who participated in my research project. And so I have written my arrival to fieldwork in three ways here
- each cluttered alongside many others. In other chapters I narrate other experiences of field.

I seek to reflect my multi-situated identity during fieldwork in multiple ways through the text of my ethnography, juxtaposing my thoughts with those of Cook Islanders, tourists, travel writers, using descriptive prose and analytical prose; assuming an authoritative voice at times and stepping away from authority at others, negotiating my place in the text, as I did in the field.

NARRATING THE FIELD (III)

It is a damp morning. The intensity of the sun’s light and heat is muted by this dampness, leaving a thick, sluggish warmth. Paul and I stand on the wet road awaiting a bus. My back to the now familiar and constant chatter of the ocean on the reef, I am facing the stillness of the interior terrain. The tranquillity is broken momentarily by a passing vehicle on the road. Clouds drape the dark mountain slopes, leaving only the feet of these giants visible. I remind myself that beneath this cloud cloak are statuesque, rugged peaks. I looked at them yesterday from a bus window and they seemed to watch back. I don’t know their names yet but the map in my bag has these details. The rain falls heavier, drowning the quiet.

An approaching yellow bus pulls up to the waving of my arm. This bus will circumnavigate the island but we are only travelling a quarter of the way round. Although we have been on this small island for over a week, we are headed to a place that we have not yet seen. I ask the elderly bus driver to show us the place to get off. He seems not to know exactly where this is but maybe he is just not interested. I look at the guidebook I hold. Its map reveals a side road that will take us onto the Ara Metua. Ara means path or route, metua means parents or forebears. The Ara Metua is the old interior road and it was the only road round the island in pre-colonial times.

The Lonely planet guidebook suggests that this is where another aspect of Rarotonga can be found,

If you hire a vehicle or take a circle island tour and go around the island on the Ara Metua, you’ll see another side to the island - swamp taro fields, white goats and black pigs grazing in pawpaw patches, citrus groves, men on ancient tractors or even digging out entire fields with shovels, and graves of the ancestors off to one side of the houses. (Keller, 1994: 96)

Beatrice Grimshaw too marvelled over this ‘other side’ of Rarotonga back in the early part of this century;

The roadway round the island is celebrated all over the Pacific, and with justice, for nothing more lovely than this twenty-mile ribbon of tropic splendour is to be found beneath the Southern Cross... (Grimshaw, 1907: 74).

This too is where we are headed, for this is where the village lies.

The road leading inland to the Ara Metua rises slightly towards the mountains. It is muddy and rutted. I wonder if it is still in regular use. We make our way
past pretty, trimmed hibiscus hedges, which almost conceal the stark houses - tiny fibrolite boxes with slat windows and rusted corrugated iron roofs. Pigs are tethered by a hind leg to stakes in the ground. The earthy smell of mud and pig manure mixes with an almost sickly sweet odour that may be the orange flesh of the pawpaw the pigs scoff. Beyond the pigs hundreds of green elephant ears stand to attention in a uniform square - this must be a taro plantation. And everywhere loom the coconut trees. Their impossibly tall trunks, their bunches of huge round fruits stored beneath lofty, outstretched and gently swaying branches; a cliched manifestation of the tropical island.

We reach the Ara Metua and the rain has stopped. We are at the foot of the mountains now. In front of us a painted archway confirms that we have reached our destination. The brown paint on the sign is flaked and dull, way outshone by the polished natural vegetation. Scarlet, crimson, and yellow flower heads bow under the weight of rainwater trickling off huge emerald leaves.

‘Tiirou!’ A strong male voice calls out and we cannot see from where it emanates. We walk hesitantly forward through the entrance and onto a cleared grass area. We can now see other people gathered and we newcomers together await a cue as to what we should do. Suddenly into the clearing strides the man to whom the voice belongs. He continues his resonant chant; intense eyes unwavering in their hold on us. He holds an upright spear in his right hand, and wears a feather cloak about his broad shoulders. His glossy black hair falls below his shoulders and is tied off his face in a topknot with feathers attached. His torso is bare apart from the cloak but he has on a short piece of cloth like a skirt with russet motifs of turtles stencilled on it, and tied around his calves are fibrous strands of dark brown plant material. He is barefoot. He finishes his chant and breaks his concerted gaze with a grin as he tells us in English that he has just welcomed us here. He walks away beckoning us to follow as he takes us to where we should go next.

TEXTUALISING THE FIELD

The critique of reflexive ethnographies as musings of the self-absorbed is well rehearsed. But good reflexive writing comments on not just the writing self, but the writing self in relation to experiencing self in relation to writing and experiencing others. There is an obligation to connect text and field - writing and lived experience. I have, in discussing the field as more context and interrelationship than place, tried to broaden the stage for this study. It is more than just the place researched and ‘written up’ in the ethnography, more than just the recorded lives of a selected group of informants - others. I want to consider the relationship between the written and the experience but also the one within the other. For the real sleight of hand is in the separation of the one from the other.

Texts clutter fields - the academic texts we survey in proposing a field and a topic, the ethnographies and novels we read in and about our fields, the letters we write and receive from friends and colleagues, all those texts written by the peoples we study - in my case, tourism policy, brochures, advertisements,
newspaper articles, and our own fieldnotes. Clifford (1986b: 117) notes that there has been a considered effort amongst fieldworkers to hide, marginalise or discredit pre-existing texts associated with their fields preferring to give an impression of starting from scratch - 'pure' research experience, rather than from reading. The experience I have had as a postgraduate student in the Anthropology program at the Australian National University has been somewhat different to this, spending a seven month period engaged almost exclusively in reading and writing prior to beginning fieldwork, but I do agree with Clifford's (1986b) general tenet that many fieldworkers draw a clear distinction between the text and the field. In my case, and in that of the other students in the Anthropology program here, our doctoral candidature is carved into sections devoted predominantly to either one or the other: the pre-field episode (reading and writing 'down'), field (experience and data recording - writing 'down'), post-field (writing 'up'). We make distinctions between the types of activities and the writing that is seen and not seen in our ethnographic texts. Furthermore, our supervisory and peer assessment revolves around this structure in that we present 'going to the field' is contingent upon presentation of a pre-field seminar, similarly, our return from the field to the 'writing up' process is monitored via a post-field seminar.

And how much do our fields clutter our texts? As I have suggested, traditional ethnographies have gone to great lengths to contain fields and prevent them cluttering our texts. These texts tidy much of the messy experience so that a clear subject/object divide emerges and the reader is left in no doubt as to the mastery of the ethnographer (writer) and the subjection to the margins of field (experience). Some do not.

Ted Swedenburg (1996) finds it imperative to bridge text and lived experience in studies of cultural-political practices of diaspora, border and hybridity which contest the notion of bounded cultures (1996: 154). These, he refers as the 'third timespace'. He calls for ethnographies of the third timespace to revise distinctions between home and field and ethnographer and subject, through incorporation of the ethnographer into the text, and allowing theory and text to reflect and participate in the multiply-positioned and fluctuating realities of quotidian life. He strikes a blow at anthropology's central dichotomy of self and other and, like Abu-Lughod (1991), the concept of culture in an autonomous, bounded, externalised sense. But how can we make these bridges between experience and text? Swedenburg (1996) and Visweswaran (1994) suggest that a continuous negotiation of positioanlities is required, a 'dismantling [of the] method of detached narration through naturalized observation', and writing by mixing and juxtaposing genres to capture the fragmentary and shifting modalities of daily life (Swedenburg, 1996: 171).
Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing researches and writes in a third timespace. Her ethnography of marginality with Meratus Dayaks of South Kalimantan, *In the realm of the diamond queen* (1993) is written against the exoticising inclination and ‘fixed alterities of Western and Other’ of earlier ethnographies (1993: 33). Tsing reveals the construction of Meratus peoples as displaced and savage ‘in the imagination of the Indonesian state ... and the visiting anthropologists and travellers who come to "know" them’ (1993: 6). She juxtaposes stories which do not necessarily sit alongside each other easily, and she shifts tone, personal involvement and narrative style to disrupt assumptions of homogeneity within the Meratus and her own process of knowledge accrualment (1993: 33). Tsing intersperses her text with narrative accounts of her conversations with various Meratus men and women, but mainly of her relationship with Uma Adang. Through making her marginal informant central Tsing explores a variety of personal intersections by means of which she learnt about Meratus positionings. The ‘Diamond Queen’ refers to the conceptual space Tsing and Uma Adang created in their ethnographic interaction.

Smadar Lavie, an Israeli anthropologist of Yemenite/Lithuanian heritage who has conducted fieldwork with the Mzeina Bedouin in the South Sinai Peninsula since 1975, also challenges the space between text and field by reflecting on her own identity in relation to her research informants. In a piece entitled ‘The one who writes us’ (also one of the names her fieldwork participants gave her) Lavie writes field into text using allegory (1993).

Lavie tells a story of how in search of a particular family camp, she was sent instead by a local fool to a deserted well far away from any habitation. She spent the night alone in the desert, frightened and without food, but in the morning chanced upon a Mzeina woman and her two young children, who rescued her and gave her food and water. After her night in the desert she had sat with the family with whom she lived during fieldwork while they lamented the loss of their Mzeina hospitality. They assumed that they might not be considered Bedouin any longer due to others’ inability to distinguish Bedouin from guests (increasingly youth were dressing in Western clothes and tourists adopted Bedouin outfits) and a lack of respect of their protocols of hospitality. Lavie narrated her experience of being sent to and rescued from the deserted well to resolve ambiguities with Mzeina hospitality and the paradoxes faced by herself and Mzeina in relating to Western culture and politics.
She explains

When the tradition of hospitality was called into question, despite my embarrassment, I felt an urge to rise up and allegorize my Shgetef-the-Fool and Ftaima-and-her-two-toddlers experience. In spite of being a stranger dressed in baggy jeans and a Mickey Mouse T-shirt, I had been taught how to introduce myself to my Bedouin hosts; I momentarily became a living representation of their traditional tribal structure and organization (1993: 177).

Lavie drew on her own experience and her own identity and position within her fieldwork (an insider-outsider) to allegorise, both to her fieldwork participants and to readers of her ethnographic text, a tale of negotiation with outsiders and of the struggle with cultural identity for the Mzeina Bedouin. She used the narrative device of allegory both to write about her experience, and in the experience of her fieldwork - as a means of communicating and performing which she had learnt from the Mzeina. Allegory bridged field and text.

Allegory, in a broad sense, calls to mind the poetic nature of writing processes, drawing attention to stories built into the representational process itself (my emphasis) (Clifford, 1986b: 99-100). It prompts us to say of any cultural description not “this represents, or symbolizes, that” but rather, “this is a (morally charged) story about that (Clifford, 1986b: 100).

Importantly, allegory demands attention simultaneously to content and form. The ways in which we structure our texts is, of course, non-accidental. And whether we attend to it or not in the writing, there is no doubt that form is read. It is through form that the articulation between text and experience can be explored, and indeed, questions of epistemology grappled with. As Dan Rose writes

Our texts are forms of how we know. If inquiry does not conform to texts one has read, the terrible reality, at least the fear, is that one’s experiences will not be relevant for the texts one will write (1993: 194).

Rose, in his On ethnographic touch (1987a) and Narrative ethnography, elite culture and the language of the market (1996), brings his moment of textual creation into the text.

From my file box of fieldnotes I have pulled a selection of cards from seven different days. They were taken from the month of May in order to write the rest of this section and to illustrate the effects of advancing warm weather on the cultural uses of street space. Always forced into looking backward from this moment in time to those, I rethink what evidence I have for what I did and thought then (1987a: 118).

He lets his field become muddied by the intrusion of the text into the field and field into the text. His is an extension of reflexive efforts of Rabinow and others who wrote in the first person in their ethnographies. But Rose goes further. In the latter article he cuts between dialogue and his notetaking and thoughts during his
own interviews which he includes in his final text. In exposing his authorial and ethnographic scaffolding through his text he invites his readers to witness Rose the author/researcher/artist at work. He writes,

The future of ethnography lies in a more sophisticated and self-conscious relationship with the novel, that is, with the possibilities of social inquiry that the novel, itself an experimental form, has opened to us (1993: 217).

Notes Rose, those who write what has become known as narrative ethnography increasingly borrow from the novel (according to Bakhtin's (1981) theoretical observations) a multi-layered consciousness, radical temporal coordinates and maximal contact with the present (1993: 217), experimenting with authority, tense and genre. Rose foresees ethnographic textual constructions such as

montages of events and analyses connected to ideas with digressive analytical and critical essays dominated by an authorial voice - either of the writer or of the subjects studied by the writer (1993: 219).

He suggests an implication of writing narrative ethnographies, in particular those that employ more than one genre, is a transformation in reading, education and subsequent ethnographic inquiry. Indeed, Rose urges, an ethnography that in telling its ‘truths’ pays attention to the work of fiction. Conceding the fictional in ethnography need not imply the untrue, assures James Clifford. Rather, we must acknowledge that ethnographic truths are ‘inherently partial’, that

even the best ethnographic texts - serious, true fictions - are systems, or economies of truth. Power and history work through them, in ways their authors cannot fully control (1986a: 7).

Writing ethnography that pays attention to fiction involves holding on on the one hand and letting go on the other. There are acts of celebration but also acts of relinquishment. Celebration of the creative role of the ethnographer, but relinquishment of the notion of a single truth and of sole or even dominant authority.

Authority cannot be avoided in an ethnographic text. It is not a matter of trying to eschew our own authority as to acknowledge it for what it is - partial at best, and to find means of acknowledging other authority present in the fieldwork and make this present also in text. This is the creative work of what Marcus and Cushman referred to as ‘experimental ethnographies’, to

24 Narrative ethnographies drawing on such novelistic devices include Michael Jackson’s Barawa (1986), Dan Rose’s Black American street life (1987b), Kirin Narayan’s Storytellers, saints and scoundrels (1989), Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing’s In the realm of the diamond queen (1993) and Ruth Behar’s Translated woman (1995).
... develop some analytical tasks and parts of the text with closure and certitude; other parts of the text are left dangling and messy - the writer self-consciously chooses not to be authoritative in his orchestration of these parts, because they are presumably commensurate with the ambiguity of the phenomenon represented (Marcus and Cushman, 1982: 45).

I have tried to subvert my ethnographic authority in this chapter by narrating three arrival stories - the anthropologist making various negotiated, and in some ways understated, entrances alongside other 'arrivers' - into the field. I also attempt to reflect in the text of the ethnography that this self of anthropologist/tourist/Papa'ā (and other fluctuating identities) is very much present in the text - not in the sense of putting my authorial stamp as the scientific observer, but in witnessing my own interactions and lived experiences in fieldwork. My authority in the text is thus bound to narratives which emerge from my fieldwork questions around how tourists experience people and experience, and traverse, place in the Cook Islands during their holiday there, and how Cook Islanders too experience the business of representing themselves and their history through tourism. I juxtapose selves and others in narratives and to reveal the complexities and shifts in selves’ and others’ positions.

Narrating the field (III) exposes me, the ethnographer, as tourist. For my journey to the hinterland and encounter with an ‘authentic’ native here is alongside those other contemporary journeyers and seekers. The texts I choose to recall here are not the classic ethnographies of this field but the prose of travel guidebooks steeped in sensory overload. I am not, here, the authoritative, knowledgable recorder of social data but the naive newcomer, daunted by the imposing landscape, wondering at unfamiliar plants, and startled by the eloquent performance of a man in native costume.

I have written narratives that are thick with visual and other sensory cues. Flashes of turquoise blues and vivid greens, the sticky wafts of frangipani hanging in the air and around sweaty necks, rhythmic waves and drums, the salty, rich, sweetness of feasts of fruits and meat. I wonder if, like me, at times the reader cringes at the echoes of tourism brochures, travel stories and guide books in my text. I have my own uneasiness at being immersed in an industry which harnesses the sensory for sale. But if tourism seems a glossy business of transience and superficiality then surely it is the work of the anthropologist here to explore its meaning. My juxtaposed narrative style calls attention to tourism’s tantalising text and image saturated nature, it allows a sustained inquiry into ways this place and these people are represented, and it ties text to field.

My purpose in composing sense-heavy text is in part for the dissonance it creates with more detached, analytic texts - past and present ethnographies of authority, but also the distinction with my own sections of authoritative text within this
work. These narrative pieces declare 'see, I am here, and I am seeing this as a tourist might, I am writing as other writers might - I am exposing my subjectivity within my anthropology' and I am emphasising the lived experience through these stories which cut the field through the text. I have attempted to write some 'tasteful ethnography' in Paul Stoller's sense, that is


I reject a pure sense of anthropological gaze which relegates the sensory to a merely illustrative role, in the margins of the 'real' work. Michael Jackson (1989) describes this as the task of the radical (against a 'traditional') empiricist. He rejects a visualist bias ('supervisory perspective') which distances subject from object and he

tries to avoid fixed viewpoints by dispersing authorship, working through all five senses, and reflecting inwardly as well as observing outwardly (1989: 8).

Acknowledging the changing contexts of the research and shifting perspectives of the text, I have shifted tenses through the text. My narrative pieces are written in present tense. Other sections of text are written in past tense. There is immediacy in the present tense. I have written these narrative pieces partly as a means of getting to the experiential in the field, of bringing the reader closer to the experiences I shared with others during fieldwork. Kirsten Hastrup (1992) endorses the use of the present tense as it represents the experience of the liminal space of ethnographic dialogue - communication between selves and others. 25 I have used the present tense to emphasise the proximity of these moments.

Johannes Fabian (1983: 80-87) has critiqued the use of the ethnographic present for putting distance between self and other by denying the other history. More generally he accuses anthropology of historically developing and then promoting a denial of coevalness between anthropologists and the peoples they study.

[Anthropology] promoted a scheme in terms of which not only past cultures, but all living societies were irrevocably placed on a temporal slope, a stream of Time - some upstream, other downstream (Fabian, 1983: 17).

Time has indeed been used in ethnographies (particularly structural functionalist works) to textually construct those studied as simplistic and unchanging, or slow to change, especially in the face of a fast-paced, transmuting modernity. Emphasis on movement and being in place, together with concerns for the

25 It should be noted that some ethnographers, such as John Davis (1992), arguing (as Hastrup does) for a more conscious relationship with time in ethnographic writing, strongly contest the use of the present tense. Davis suggests further use of the past tense to fix description in a particular time (1992: 216). See his chapter also in Anthropology and autobiography (1992) for further analysis of the different uses of tense (particularly the present tense) in ethnographic writing.
present, past and future by all interlocutors within this research are issues crucial to this ethnography. A shifting use of tense further illuminates these assertions.

Indeed, within the evocative and descriptive prose of narratives are analytic questions. Throughout the ethnographic text I pose and address questions in narrative about the interpretation of image, performance, history and place. Sometimes these narratives contain remembered performances in place which enact and re-imagine histories - like legend-telling on tours, or the speeches and some of the floats in the national constitution day parade. Or they are constructed around remembered places from which to reflect on my own imagining of histories told and performed - like in deep water on the edge of a reef looking back at raised cliffs in which I have heard stories of pre-colonial wars and imminent family rituals, or peering down from a plane window at lagoon islands, an airstrip built by American soldiers during the war, and imagining the first ocean voyage to Aitutaki. Or narratives reconstruct an image that will become a history of a performance in place - as in the recalled preparation and setting of the scene for a tourist couple's beach wedding.

In writing narrative sections into ethnography I have endeavoured to loosen the grip of the type of authority that fails to question an author's position within her research - field and text. But while I delve into narrative experimentation with text, I must take responsibility for the choices I make in which stories to recount, for the authority I take in the telling of them, and for the pattern that emerges as I lay down the trail for the reader to take through reading my writing of ethnographic text.

Considering written travel accounts and the paths therein Bishop writes,

Most travel accounts consist of small islands of personal narrative afloat on an ocean of dates and geography. These well-structured stories are often threaded together into a sequence which is entirely dependent on the idea of route. The image of the route emerges as the key to their apparent coherence and authenticity. Even the personal experiences of the traveller are secondary to the coherence and logic of the route; the route gives the traveller the authority to narrate (Bishop, 1989: 3).

I too call attention to routes. My treatment of field in this chapter offers a challenge to readers to consider the paths we create through ethnographic fields and texts. But it is not a path of consistency and linear progression - it is circuitous and at times demands leaps from point to point along the way. The movement of writing echoes the movement of travel.

Susan Stewart pondering genres of writing and of travel states,

Just as the movement of writing takes places within a history of forms and possibilities for excursus, so does the movement of travel have its pregiven genres: the one-way and the round-trip, the stopping by wayside, the return home, the journey into outer
space and the journey around one’s room, the business trip and the holiday, the pilgrimage and the march to the sea. Similarly, the resting places of significance in travel are either those centers of mixing and dialogue and consequently danger - the inn and the crossroads - or those places of seclusion and silence where one confronts an interior consciousness made of external censors: the forest, the holy site, the shrine, and the temple (Stewart, 1996: 134).

My arrival stories in this chapter can be read as an allegory for the ensuing larger story of my ethnographic text and my fieldwork. The connection between the stories follows my route alongside other visitors to the Cook Islands through the defined path shaped by the tourism industry - a visit to a travel agency, the international airport arrival, and the visit to a local tour. Superficially it might be seen as a simple ‘going in’ tale. But in thinking of the path through the stories as a route through field (in a contextual sense, as I have argued here, rather than essentialised place) this ‘arrival in the field’ route foreshadowed important recurrent themes I was to encounter throughout fieldwork. Themes of: movement - seen here in my movement between arrival sites alongside tourists’ movements and Cook Islanders’ movements; the relationship between representations of place and people, and lived experiences - such as the constant reference to stories (texts - brochures and guide books here - and spoken narratives) about places in the Cooks by both tourists and Cook Islanders (other narratives reveal this further) as part of an experience in this place; the oscillation between references to the present, past and future - tourists’ consumed by the pleasure of the moment search for information about old culture, and Islanders’ performance of past with post-modern dexterity.

Clifford locates the routes of travel and writing as following an outwardly directed trajectory - from experience to representation. He writes,

Spatial practices of travel and temporal practices of writing have been crucial to the definition and representation of a topic - the translation of ongoing experience and entangled relationship into something more distanced and representable (Clifford, 1990; Clifford, 1997a: 57).

But my path here through these arrival stories is a re-routing. Rather, it is a path from the distant to the proximate - the consideration of place as viewed from afar to place as lived experience. It is a consideration of field as imagined and constructed space, and then lived and experienced place, the latter containing all the richness, curiosity and mess of texts, senses, and other people.

I have endeavoured to interweave the path I took on fieldwork with the path I take in ethnographic writing. The writing, like the fieldwork, emulates a physical journey but also a journey in knowledge. The text represents this journey in its consideration of my initial inexperience with a place I planned to travel to - like
that of tourists - and my gradual getting to know the place and the people - as an anthropologist (but a tourist too).

The text follows a meandering line traversing the terrain of various identities. The overall structure of this chapter’s trilogy of narratives must also be read as my initial engagement with or thoughts about and impressions of three groups of interlocutors - travel agents, tourists, and Cook Islanders working within the tourism industry. It is their (and my) engagements with representations and experiences of people and place within the Cook Islands tourism industry that forms the subject of this ethnography. This work attempts to understand from the perspectives of anthropologist, of tourists, and of Cook Islanders. So the way through the text oscillates between viewpoints and deliberately rejects a simplistic delineation between these. It acknowledges that, although for different reasons, visiting tourists and local Cook Islanders can sometimes make similar claims.

This path taken through field and text questions a simplification of tourism to a problem of ‘guests’ versus ‘hosts’ (and problematises these very terms). With the intention of considering the close workings of the tourism industry in action I chose to consider both tourists and indigenous peoples working within the tourism industry. Thus my conceptualisation of field was a movable one from the start, and traversing it - as I have indicated here with three different narrative arrival stories - necessitated posing questions in and of various contexts. Throughout the ethnographic text I have juxtaposed viewpoints to emphasise the articulation between subjects and to subvert assumptions that indigenous peoples are necessarily victims of a superimposed force that is tourism.
Chapter Two

PROCLAMATIONS OF PLACE, DISCOVERIES OF DESTINY

The history of things will have to enfold the meanings of the present in which they were made and all the meanings of their successive presents. It is the same with places. The history in places, especially in places of cross-cultural encounters, will take as much imagination as science to see. Blood and ashes are blown away with the dirt. Shouts and songs die on the wind. Pain and happiness are as evanescent as memory. To catch the lost passions in places history [anthropology] will have to be a little more artful than being a ‘non-fiction’. It will have to have, among other graces, a trust in and a sense of the continuities of living through different times, despite all the transformations and translations that masquerade as discontinuities (Dening, 1998: 159).

The ocean is not merely our omnipresent, empirical reality; equally important, it is our most wonderful metaphor for just about anything we can think of. Contemplation of its vastness and majesty, its allurement and fickleness, its regularities and unpredictability, its shoals and depths, and its isolating and linking role in our histories, excites the imagination and kindles a sense of wonder, curiosity, and hope that could set us on journeys to explore new regions of creative enterprise that we have not dreamt of before (Hau'ofa, 1998: 406).

Recalled moments in national history - such as the opening of an international airport - shape a nation’s image of itself and the story of its past and present relationships to other places. The emergence and experience of contemporary tourism in the Cook Islands is intertwined with nation-making and colonialism. The colonial basis of tourism to the island group is revealed in New Zealand’s parent-nation stance toward the Cook Islands, tours to the Cooks by government officials and the opening of Rarotonga’s international airport. Tourism in the Cooks must be considered through reflection on what this means for Rarotonga and for the island micro-state within the region as a whole.

A province in the Pacific for New Zealand

Seeking a more independent status from Britain throughout the 1880s, New Zealand assumed a pivotal role in shaping Cook Islands colonial history. Repeated efforts by New Zealand, acting as unofficial agent and adviser for the British Crown in the Pacific, eventually persuaded a reluctant British Colonial
Office to take a more assertive imperial stance in the region. A partial success was achieved with the prevention of a perceived French threat on the Hervey Islands (as the Southern Cook Islands were then known) (Gilson, 1980: 58). Additional appeals from Rarotongan ariki, Makea (seen through colonial eyes as the Cook Islands’ Queen) resulted in the 1888 formation of a British Protectorate over the Cook Islands.

No longer content to play imperial watchdog for the mother country, and anxious to beat the proposed Australian Commonwealth to possession of its own colonies, New Zealand had colonial designs of its own at the turn of the new century. New Zealand Premier Richard Seddon (nicknamed King Dick) in 1890 made a tour of some of the Southern Cook Islands, under the official guise of a health cruise. He courted Makea Ariki with dutiful claims of New Zealand assistance, making, among other offers, promises of an inter-island schooner for loyalty to New Zealand (Scott, 1991: 81). The following year Seddon’s plan came to fruition with the complete annexation of the Cook Islands to New Zealand. The New Zealand Premier presented this publicly as a successful rescue mission of the failed protectorate. Annexation, he claimed, was to every party’s advantage. It would be no financial burden to New Zealand, but would indeed benefit New Zealanders by producing large quantities of agricultural goods. In this

1 New Zealand tried unsuccessfully to effect stronger action on the part of Britain with regard to the acquisition of Tonga and Samoa.

2 Northern group Cook Islanders, especially the peoples of Tongareva and Rakahanga, felt more than threatened by the French. In 1862 the French government schooner *Latouche-Treville* had recruited workers from these islands for Tahitian plantations. The French owned plantations proved to be notorious for their ill-treatment of workers - forcing the extension of contracts, failing to repatriate workers to their home islands, and underpaying or withholding wages. Only days after the *Latouche-Treville* departed with its contract workers, Tongareva was to suffer a near complete decimation of its population with the arrival of the Peruvian slave ship the *Adelante*. Encouraged by missionaries to go to make money for local church restorations, 472 of 570 Tongareva Islanders departed over the ensuing months, unknowingly to be sold as labourers in Peru. Four Tongareva Islanders returned. Most of the Pacific Islanders bound for South America on these ships died from diseases on route. Throughout this time Britain maintained a ‘hands off’ policy with regard to the Peruvian slave trade in the Pacific. Sending a warship to the Pacific after the event, and instructing British diplomats in Peru to protest should the trade resume ‘perpetuate[d] the fiction of Britain’s leadership in abolishing the trade’ (Maude, 1981: 166; Scott, 1991: 30-33).

3 Makea Ariki is described by Beatrice Grimshaw in her early promotional publication *Islands of the Blest* as ‘a remarkable character … extremely tall and stout in proportion … she still has the remains of beauty and charm’ (1901: 10). The travel writer advised her readers, ‘although [Queen Makea] does not care to receive many visitors, she can generally be induced to give an audience to travellers who have a right to ask for the favour’ (1901: 10).

4 At the time of declaration of the protectorate HMS *Hyacinth*’s Captain Bourke accidentally annexed the islands of the Cooks to Britain. This mistake was ultimately remedied for the southern Cook Islands except for Aitutaki, and the northern atolls, the quiet assumption being Aitutaki’s lagoon offered a potential strategic harbour (Scott, 1991: 43).
commercial process Cook Islanders, whom Seddon paternally referred to as kinsfolk, would also be helped toward development (Gilson, 1980: 102).

Makea Ariki, 'Queen' of Rarotonga at the time of Beatrice Grimshaw's visit. (Photo in Scott (1991) from Zeta Craig, Auckland).

Makea Ariki and New Zealand Premier Richard Seddon, on his 1890 tour to the Cooks. (Photo in Scott (1991) from Zeta Craig, Auckland).
Ultimately, traditional leadership was viewed as counter productive to development of the tropical province. Governing of the Cook Islands under the colonial administration of New Zealand involved a steady undermining of traditional leadership and the ultimate authority of the New Zealand appointed Resident Commissioner. *Ariki* - the paramount chiefs - were recognised only in a ceremonial sense and *mata'iapo* and *rangatira* not at all by the early administration. This erosion of traditional leadership is a legacy, which continued throughout the colonial administration and in the formation of the new nation.

The establishment of the Land Court in 1902 effected profound and far-reaching changes to political and social life for Cook Islanders. The Land Court sought to boost production on what was seen to be idle land, and provide the means for European settlement (which never eventuated). Traditionally, land was held by localised patrilineal descent groups (Crocombe, 1987: 59). The Land Court, stating its aim to free commoners from chiefly authority, instigated bilineal succession to lands, introduced individualised titles and effectively usurped the role of paramount chiefs - the *ariki* - as well as *mata'iapo*, and *rangatira*. It insisted that disputes involving land should pass formally through the court, rather than continue to be resolved according to chiefly discretion. Permanent

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5 In 1946 the Cook Islands Legislative Council provided some ex-officio places for *ariki*, but not to other leaders.

6 The Constitution of 1964, drafted by New Zealanders, further eroded chiefly power. The House of Ariki, glossed as a form of upper house of parliament containing one *ariki* from each island and six from Rarotonga, was established but lacked political power, providing merely a nominal advisory role in relation to land (Jacob, 1979: 142). The *ariki* status of the paramount leader was effectively replaced by the Queen’s Representative as Head of State - appointed by the Prime Minister. Albert Henry, lacking the support of the *ariki*, legitimised the roles of other traditional leaders in government structure. In 1972 his Cook Islands Party government created the Koutu Nui through the House of Ariki Amendment Act. The act provided for meetings of *kāvāna*, *mata'iapo* and *rangatira* to discuss custom and tradition, and assist with Island Councils. This was supposed to be a national body but in practice has mainly been a Rarotongan entity. Both bodies of traditional leaders had no pre-existing historical or cultural precedent. See Takiora Ingram (1992) and Jeff Sissons (1994) for detailed discussion of the impacts of democratisation on traditional chiefly leadership.

7 The role of the Land Court was transferred to the Land Division of the High Court in 1981.

8 The outer islands of Mangaia and Pukapuka both rejected the Land Court (Crocombe, 1987: 62).

9 The lesser chiefs - *mata'iapo* and *rangatira* - directly controlled land in sub-divisions called *tapere*. The district in which *tapere* were contained was referred to under the title of the *ariki*, who had overall control of the district and commanded obligations such as labour and materials for *marae* (sacred (*tapu*) areas (demarcated by stones) used for ceremonial purposes) construction, feasts and battles (prior to missionisation) from *mata'iapo* and *rangatira* (Gilson, 1980: 15-19). Now *mata'iapo* can be bypassed altogether if family members want access to ancestral land through the Land Court - they need only obtain a majority of family signatures.
alienation of land has remained prohibited pre- and post-colonially\(^{10}\) and presently land can only be transferred through rights of inheritance, lease and occupation.

In New Zealand attention turned to efforts to make the Islands earn their keep. Economic development was pursued mainly through the growth of orange and banana crops for a New Zealand market. However, this trade in perishable goods was fraught with problems such as cyclones, dependency on an infrequent shipping service for export to New Zealand, limited cargo space aboard the ships, market fluctuations, and no protective tariff (Gilson, 1980: 156-7). With gradual economic development the demand for labour in Rarotonga increased - local people were employed by European planters, on the wharves, fumigation sheds and public works schemes. However, there was no paid employment available on any of the outer islands.

Few Cook Islanders had been able to access the level of education required to fill skilled positions. These were occupied by colonial officials. Social development in the years shortly after annexation was hampered by the racist attitude of Resident Commissioner Gudgeon who was adamant in his reluctance to commit New Zealand support for education of Cook Islanders. He favoured the continuation of missionary-run schools to teach Māori for the purposes of reading the bible. Gudgeon stated,

> When they have by race-contact obtained a stiffening of European blood they may be capable of using the education given to them; but the pure and unadulterated Native of the South Seas is a self-indulgent animal, and after a period of nine years I have neither respect for his character nor hope for his future... (NZPP, A-3, 1908: 14; cited in Gilson, 1980: 171).

A more progressive attitude toward development in the Cook Islands did not manifest for a further twenty years. Sir Apirana Ngata, Minister for the Cook Islands, stated,

> To deny a sufficient education to the Polynesian tribes in these islands would not be humane ... the Polynesian must be given a sporting chance to understand the world into which he has been projected and to fill his part therein efficiently... (NZPP, A-3, 1932: 4; cited in Gilson, 1980: 174).

Significantly, it was acknowledged that Cook Islanders’ own social and cultural institutions had been eroded through missionary and colonial contact, reflected in a loss of cultural knowledge and confidence among the population and general dislocation of society together with a high incidence of disease and rising

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\(^{10}\) The Cook Islands government has alienated a small amount of land for public purposes, such as schools, hospitals and roads (Jacob, 1979: 142).
mortality rate. The Administration realised that rather than helping they were hindering indigenous development. The employment of locally trained local teachers and reforms to the education system were seen as the means with which to bridge a widening gap between European and Māori cultures. Although it was intended that education would embrace all of native life, due to the loss of artefacts there was little emphasis given to weaving, carving or oral histories, and English was emphasised above other subjects.

The 1935 New Zealand Labour government reviewed the responsibility for the tropical territories, placing the Cook Islands, Niue, and Western Samoa under the Minister and Department of Island Territories. Committed to economic development, the government initiated a concerted effort to boost the Cooks’ fruit industry. At the recommendation of the New Zealand Marketing Commission, government control of fruit marketing in the Cook Islands was initiated and the Department of Agriculture offered young trees and technical assistance to growers who had individual land titles. Cyclones and World War II however hindered the development of the fruit industry and plantations remained neglected, as many Islanders looked to prospects for work overseas (Scott, 1991: 224-225).

Work for Cook Islands men as labourers and factory workers and women as domestic and factory workers was readily available in Auckland during and after World War II; they were protected from exploitation by the minimum wage legislation, and entitled to social security as New Zealand citizens. Increasing emigration to New Zealand highlighted the lack of economic development in the Cooks, and agitation against the New Zealand administration in the Cooks grew.

Sporadic economic and social, but not political, development had been the emphasis New Zealand had taken with respect to the Cook Islands. Resentment at the administration’s restrictive control over the Islands generated the formation of the Cook Islands Progressive Association (CIPA) in 1943. Adopting trade union methods, the CIPA fostered nationalist campaigning for Cook Islands representation in the New Zealand Parliament arguing for higher wages, improved shipping and for a reduction in the powers of the Resident Commissioner (Gilson, 1980: 194). CIPA branches were established in Auckland.

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11 The number of Cook Islanders in New Zealand increased dramatically in the thirty years post-war - from 354 in 1945 to 18,610 in 1976 (New Zealand Coalition for Trade and Development, 1982: 62). This is reflective of a general post-war Pacific Island emigration and rural to urban migration, the latter was the experience of Māori in New Zealand as well as Pacific Islanders within their home islands (Pearson, 1990: 116; Loomis, 1990).
and Wellington as well as throughout the Cook Islands and the charismatic Auckland-based Aitutakian Albert Henry rose to leadership of the association.

Political control over the Cook Islands was nonetheless to remain with the New Zealand government until 1965. Although a Legislative Council was formed in 1946, this had limited powers. The Legislative Council was comprised of both officially appointed and elected members with the Resident Commissioner presiding at all meetings - most of the members were colonial officials (Gilson, 1980: 20). This became a Legislative Assembly in 1957, comprising twenty-two elected members and five officials (Short, 1987: 177; Sissons, 1999: 15).

The 1955 Belshaw-Stace report, highly critical of New Zealand’s role in economic and social development in the Cook Islands, together with decolonisation pressure from the United Nations in 1960, motivated a review of New Zealand’s relationship to the Cooks (Scott, 1991: 279, 283). In Rarotonga in 1963 the Minister of Island Territories in New Zealand, Sir Leon Gotz presented the options for future constitutional development to Cook Islands leaders. As Iaveta Short explains, the political way ahead was a foregone conclusion.

The Cook Islands were basically sitting in New Zealand's pocket. Its people were enjoying free access to New Zealand and its employment opportunities. New Zealand provided a ready market for its agricultural produce; New Zealand was financing the already bloated administration which had set it up; New Zealand citizenship was extended to the Cook Islanders and many of them had lived for years in New Zealand. Complete independence would have meant severing the connections and family ties with our people in New Zealand. Thus the decision was clear-cut. We had only one alternative worth considering - Self-Government (1987: 177).

The 1964 the Cook Islands Constitution Act provided the terms for the Cook Islands to become self-governing in free association with New Zealand. In 1965 Albert Henry’s newly formed Cook Islands Party was elected to government, winning fourteen of the twenty-two seats. New Zealand maintained strong influence, controlling external affairs and defence but the Cooks now had the constitutional power to move toward complete independence if they so wished (Short, 1987: 177-178).

The broader nation-making agenda for the Cook Islands has been long connected to the development of a tourism industry (Sissons, 1999). The opening of the Cook Islands’ international airport in 1974 marked the beginning of international tourism and the widespread promotion of this micro-state as a tropical island destination. In the political context of heightened nationalism since the late

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12 Commensurate with these national agendas Air New Zealand also played a pivotal role in the airport establishment. New Zealand’s national airline needed a refuelling stopover point for its
1980s, tourism-led economic development has been the focus both for the government and the private sector in the Cooks. Anthropologist Jeff Sissons portrays it as an increasingly commodified, postmodern national space in which ‘modern’ and ‘traditional’ identities now rub shoulders (1994: 392).

This close relationship between tourism development and nation-making is reflected in an appeal to the gaze of others in order to be seen as a nation in its own right. 13

**Early tours - inspecting the colony**

Prior to the establishment of the airport, and to self-government, New Zealand officials made trips to the Cook Islands in the form of ‘tours of inspection’. These inspection tours were the forerunner to New Zealand’s part in the early development of a tourism industry to the Cook Islands. Before tourism per se became a major feature of island life, foreign visitors arrived on board the *M V. Moana Roa* during the 1960s and before that, the *Maui Pomare* (in service on the Cook Islands run since 1942, when it replaced the first refrigerated vessel for fruit shipping, the *Matua*). The *Moana Roa*’s usual run was Auckland - Rarotonga - Southern Cook Islands - Rarotonga - Auckland but as well as this, intermittent visits from colonial officials from the New Zealand Department of Island Territories took place. These visits often took the form of Pacific Island cruises with paying passengers accompanying officials on these tours. The tours were a chance for inspection of its colony by New Zealand but they also promoted an image of New Zealand as a caring nation, and the Cooks as a tranquil and obliging colony. In so doing they sewed the seeds for tourism for the island group.

In 1962 the vessel made a trip from Auckland, to Rarotonga, the northern group islands of Penrhyn, Manihiki, Rakahanga and Pukapuka, and on to Niue, and then returned to Auckland. It was the first trip taken from New Zealand to the northern group islands since 1903.

The Manihiki Resident Agent wrote to the Resident Commissioner in Rarotonga (March 11th, 1962) concerning the *Moana Roa*’s visit to Manihiki and Rakahanga expressing a need to accommodate both the villages of Tauhunu and Tukao to perform welcomes. He further commented on which villages’ hula costumes

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13 Importantly, appealing to a gaze of others means casting a self-reflexive gaze on oneself. In the ensuing chapters of the ethnography I explore this further by considering how tourism is played out, experientially and performatively, in a contemporary context in the Cook Islands.
would be the best to photograph with the lagoon as a backdrop, and promised that
the villages ‘will be a credit’ after his instigation of a titaka (clean-up) (New
Zealand Department of Island Territories. 1962. File no. 90/6).

As well as a tour of inspection on the part of the Minister of Island Territories this
was a tour devoted to recording data for use by New Zealand in publicising the
attributes of the islands, and the activities of the minister - ‘aspects of life and
work of the Administration’. The Minister of the Island Territories, the Resident
Commissioner of the Cook Islands, a photographer and public relations officer, a
camera crew from the New Zealand film unit (making a film about New
Zealand’s work in the South Pacific), and a group of thirty-four tourists made the
journey. The Otago Daily Times (3 March 1962) reported

Many overseas visitors consider that the island [Rarotonga] has considerable potential
as a tourist resort. Some have remarked that its scenery rivals that of the more widely
known Tahiti, Moorea and Bora Bora.

Women passengers were advised: ‘For shore attire in the islands shorts and slacks
are not recommended as they may offend the islanders [sic] sense of propriety’.
Men were advised: ‘Local residents wear long hose with shorts’ (New Zealand
Department of Island Territories. 1962, 4-5. File no. 83/1/8).

In 1963 the vessel, emulating its previous year’s trip around the northern group
islands and Niue, left on a tour of the southern group of the Cook Islands. New
Zealand’s Tourism and Publicity Department aimed at attracting ‘middle-aged to
retired people with an interest in travel’ to the cruise through Auckland,
Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin newspapers. The papers ran stories about
the Moana Roa’s first one hundred thousand miles on the Cook Islands run and
advertisements in the travel sections. Alongside this effort it was suggested that
the Department of Island Territories also contact Cook Islands communities in
New Zealand to notify interested Cook Islanders of the opportunity to make the
trip.

But a telegram (9 February 1962) from the Resident Commissioner in Rarotonga
to the Department of Island Territories in Wellington sounded an alarm about the
benefits of such a trip for tourism promotion if Cook Islanders should be given
preference on the trip. It reads:

Current rumour is that number of Cook Islanders and Niueans travelling on March
Moana Roa as tourists and they have been given preference. Find this hard to believe
but if this is so it surely defeats any idea of improving tourism and believe island
councils will refuse umukais and entertainment if they think it is for their own people (New Zealand Department of Island Territories. 1962. File no. 90/6).

The tour emphasised inspection and entertainment activities at each island. Apart from a three-day stay on Rarotonga, a different island was visited each day. The program featured welcome ceremonies, feasts, dance performances and island tours/inspections. The itinerary for Ma'uke is typical of the tour activities on each island.

Mauke Monday 22nd April

Morn. Resident agent and Mrs Hall conduct visitors ashore. Inspection of Guard of Honour and welcome speeches. Visit demonstration farm and a series of demonstrations of arrowroot manufacturing, canoe building, house thatching and the making of tapa cloth.

Trip round the island.

Noon. Umukai followed by entertainment.


By the late 1960s New Zealand was giving more than a passing glance to the prospect of some of the Cook Islands for tourism. Features of the sea/landscapes and the peoples were examined for potential appeal to an industry based on outsider preferences and comfort. Deputy General Manager of New Zealand's Tourism and Publicity Department, R. S. Austin, in a report following a 1967 visit to Rarotonga and Aitutaki wrote;

The Cook Islands possess one of the major ingredients for a successful tourist industry, ie. a consistently warm climate. Further, the islands enjoy a native culture less unspoilt by outside influence than is the case in Tahiti and Fiji, and Rarotonga itself has a typically South Sea Island terrain.

(New Zealand Department of Island Territories. 1968. File no. 90/11/20).

People on both Rarotonga and Aitutaki were described as 'very friendly'. On Rarotonga the native villages and homes were described as 'mainly European style small houses, generally reasonably kept and many surrounded by well kept tropical fruit orchards'. On Aitutaki the aesthetic interpretation was not as positive. Dwellings were 'generally European style in poor surroundings and poorly maintained and unattractive', there were also 'little if any natural features on the island [except for the] large lagoon with good coral beaches'. Aitutaki was portrayed in terms of a depleted landscape - a nowhere development. But a more colonially connected Rarotonga offered

14 An umukai is a feast cooked in an underground oven. Umu means earth oven, kai means food.
attractive mountains, peaks, seascapes, beaches, tropical growth and forest plantations. Consistently warm climate... [and a] lagoon [described as] very attractive and with some historic interest. (New Zealand Department of Island Territories. 1968. File no. 90/11/20).

Foreigners have long gazed on Rarotonga and other islands of the Cooks and contemplated how to better attract other foreigners to their shores. I shall revisit this point in following chapters with regard to the efforts of early twentieth century travel guide writing to distil a representation of the Cooks as a paradise, and a reinscription of the gaze of early colonial ‘inspection’ in contemporary island tours.

**The colonial machinations of tourism**

Most Pacific Island states which have become known as holiday destinations have been placed on the map partly through the machinations of metropolitan nation states. For political and economic reasons it has suited several metropolitan states to have tropical provinces, such as the United States with Hawai‘i, France with Tahiti and New Caledonia, and New Zealand with the Cook Islands. In the establishment of tropical island destinations these metropolitan states were viewed as the main markets, and to a degree this has not changed dramatically - Australia, the USA and New Zealand continue to provide the largest numbers of annual visitors to the thirteen member countries of the South Pacific Tourism Organisation (South Pacific Tourism Organisation, 1999: 25).

Aitutaki was the first of the islands to gain much in the way of regular inter-island air transport. A United States army labour battalion, based on the island during the latter part of World War II, orchestrated the building of the airstrip used to this day. Air services to Rarotonga began as part of an increased spending program in the Cooks by New Zealand during the late stages of World War II. In 1944 the New Zealand Public Works Department built a five thousand foot long airstrip on Rarotonga costing forty-nine thousand pounds. A fortnightly air service taking three days one way to Rarotonga and Aitutaki (from Auckland via Fiji, Tonga and Western Samoa) was maintained at a loss to the New Zealand National Airways Corporation (NAC). Fares were calculated so that passengers between Rarotonga and Auckland paid an amount commensurate with the shortest distance between the two points rather than with the actual distance

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15 The success of Aitutaki’s airstrip and flight service led to the gradual establishment in the 1970s of grass airstrips on the Ngaputoru islands (‘Atiu, Mitiaro, Ma’uke), and also on Mangaia. In 1973 Air New Zealand and the Cook Islands government collaborated (90%:10%) on an inter-island airline; Cook Islands Airways. By 1978 Air Rarotonga, the Cook Islands first nationally owned and operated airline was established and operates to the present.

Tasman Empire Airways Limited (TEAL) - the forerunner to Air New Zealand - opened a monthly island 'Coral Route' service, flying eleven Solent flying-boats between Auckland and Papeete via Fiji and Aitutaki. TEAL furthered Aitutaki's connection to other places by making it a stopover but this was of arguable financial benefit for the island itself as it was primarily a refuelling stop and the passengers did not overnight. It did, however, put Aitutaki and the Cooks on the Pacific tourism map. Aitutaki began to be recognised as a 'tropical paradise' by a wider audience. A postcard of the time portrays the lagoon's beauty conflated with the beauty of Aitutaki women.

![Postcard](https://example.com/postcard.jpg)

The beauty of Aitutaki’s lagoon (and women) became a Coral Route trademark in this 1950s postcard. A TEAL flying-boat can be seen in the background to the left of the two women. (Photo in Hall (1994)).

With the withdrawal of the New Zealand NAC service in 1952, and of TEAL in 1960, Polynesian Airlines from Western Samoa operated the only flight into and out of the Cooks between 1963-1966. This ended in 1966, due to international restrictions on the use of small passenger planes for long distance flights.

As earlier in the century, New Zealand expressed benevolent interest in economic and social development for the Cook Islands during the 1960s in debates leading

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16 The representation and lived experience of Aitutaki as a holiday destination is further examined later. Chapter Three explores the trajectories followed by tourists on lagoon cruises in Aitutaki and Chapter Four considers the representation of Aitutaki as a tropical wedding destination.
up to and concerning the construction of an international airport on Rarotonga. But behind this expression of benevolence was an assumption that the ‘tropical province’ would generate income through tourism for New Zealand. Indeed, the Minister of Island Territories regarded the immanent airport as a sign that the islands would become a tropical playground for New Zealanders (*Auckland Star*, 14 September 1967).

The instigation of a mass tourism industry in the years following self-government was negotiated between the two nations. It was an income-generating effort for the new island micro-state while for New Zealand it was a relinquishing of responsibility on the one hand, and an entrenchment of ties on the other. Negotiations between the New Zealand and Cook Islands governments culminated in an agreement in 1969 for a new international airport able to accommodate large commercial jets to be built at a cost of $11 million to New Zealand.\(^{17}\) It was an expensive price for Rarotonga too - the loss of twenty percent of the island’s arable land (R. G. Ward. Personal communication, 2002). Don Silk describes the scene when the first DC8 landed on Rarotonga in 1972.\(^{18}\)

> Half the island turned out and the scene at the airport was a total shambles. Although the runway was finished, there was little else. There was no way of controlling the crowd. It rained in torrents, but nobody cared, although the terminal building was still without a roof. Customs and Immigration gave up; the passengers were pretty well all Cook Islanders anyway (1994: 185).

The airport was completed in December 1973 and opened in January of the following year. Air New Zealand has been the predominant, and for most of the time the only, airline flying to Rarotonga.

Far from heralding independence for the developing nation New Zealand continued to cast the Cook Islands in a colonial light.

> ... [by] the mid-1970s New Zealanders established their own patch of paradise by both pioneering and dominating tourism (at least until 1992) to their one-time dependency - the Cook Islands (Douglas and Douglas, 1996: 29).

In the years since the 1974 opening of the Rarotongan international airport ‘Rarotonga and the Cook Islands’ have become an entity represented to a wider world as a tropical island destination. The ‘tropical province of New Zealand’ notion dominated representations of the Cook Islands to a white New Zealand middle class public throughout the 1970s and 1980s. The slogan ‘the As Always

\(^{17}\) See Britton and Kissling (1984: 91-96) for a detailed explanation and summary of the 1968/9 civil aviation agreement between the Cook Islands and New Zealand.

\(^{18}\) Don Silk was the co-owner of the Silk and Boyd inter-island shipping company in the Cooks in the 1960s and 1970s, and is presently Rarotonga’s Harbourmaster. He wrote *From kauri trees to sunlight seas: shoestring shipping in the South Pacific* (1994).
Isles' depicted a place in a sleepy state of suspended animation in contrast to the grim plight of many people in a politically conservative New Zealand in the throws of a long economic recession. The 'As Always Isles' also masked the plight of Cook Islanders who had migrated to New Zealand in their thousands to work at low and semi-skilled jobs for poor wages, and to live in the poorly serviced suburbs of south Auckland.

The Cook Islands government has endeavoured to develop the tourism industry in a 'controlled and orderly' way. Tourism was to be 'for the islands, by the islands and as they want it', according to the 1991 Cook Islands Tourism Master Plan. But the tourism profile for the Cooks is heavily influenced by what is best for the dominant international carrier, Air New Zealand (Burns and Cleverdon, 1995).

Tourism is presently the predominant industry in the Cook Islands. New Zealanders have comprised the majority of visitors to the Cook Islands until 1992. Since this time approximately fifty thousand tourists per annum visit the Cook Islands (Tourism Cook Islands, Tourist Arrivals Statistical Bulletin, 1997). Since then Europe has become the major market for tourists to the Cook Islands, comprising one-third, with New Zealanders presently representing only one-quarter of tourists.

A colonial coming of age - memorialising the nation at the airport

To isolate particular events or episodes of history can be misleading, risking an assumption that there is a single reading, a linear chronology of events waiting to be told. Yet, in the telling of stories, and simultaneously in the making of histories, pivotal moments are found and seized upon. In the multiple tellings of pasts and futures and in the multiple readings of what is told, for socio-political purposes histories are made momentous. Assertions of nationhood and assertions of colonial power require particular tellings of history. I want to suggest here that the relationship of person to place is invoked by both Sir Albert Henry and the Queen to witness the nation-making moment of 1974.

National history was made on January 29th 1974 on Rarotonga. Queen Elizabeth II's opening of the international airport made much of futures promised and pasts reminisced. Her presence reinforced past and present colonial connections - with the British Empire, the Commonwealth, New Zealand - and memorialised the event for the nine year-old nation. The opening of the Cook Islands international airport set a precedent for shaping the trajectory of the new nation. The nation would develop from the foundation of tourism. Tourism would set in place the means for travel into and out from the island nation for foreigners and Islanders alike.
The Mangaian dance team, winners of the ninth annual Constitution celebration’s Air New Zealand dance trophy. Air New Zealand provides both a backdrop and a means for travelling cultural performances. (Photo in Hall, (1994)).

From this moment onwards the airport would transform the connection between the Cooks and other places and people. But not only did the airport launch tourism to the islands, it provided the means for large numbers of Islanders to leave in droves, which they did.¹⁹

¹⁹ Numbers of departing Cook Islanders rose from 1,224 in 1971 to 6,659 in 1978 (New Zealand Coalition for Trade and Development, 1982: 63, 3). From the mid-1970s the population of Cook Islanders in New Zealand reached that of those in the Cook Islands. It has superseded this in the following twenty-five years - the 1996 Cook Islands population was 18, 071 while diasporic population in New Zealand was approximately 50,000 (Cook Islands census of population and dwellings, 1996: 10).
Premier Albert Henry addressed Queen Elizabeth on her arrival at Rarotonga, the day before the opening ceremony. Admittedly, ‘shaking with honour’, he expressed the official sentiments of the nation to the Commonwealth monarch with deference to the colonial power,

never, since the discovery of these islands by your early navigators more than two hundred years ago have we been graced by a visit from a reigning monarch. In stepping on to our soil, you have given us the recognition we have craved for:- You have this day lowered the final veil between us your loyal subjects and you the sovereign we love (New Zealand Department of Island Territories. 1974. File no. 90/24/11).^20

Albert Henry recalled the past in terms of European ‘discovery’ and connected this to the present re-discovery of this colonial relationship – ‘loyal subjects and you the sovereign’. The Queen’s ‘stepping onto our soil’, brought together these two moments in history - in their relation of people to place - ‘first contact’ and hospitality for the monarch.

The following excerpts from Premier Sir Albert Henry’s and Queen Elizabeth II’s speeches regarding the opening of the Rarotongan International airport were accessed from the same archival source.
In her reply Queen Elizabeth reiterated the ‘discovery’ of the islands, remarking on the friendliness of the Islanders encountered by the European navigators. With the air of a well-pleased grandmother she praised ‘the Polynesians of the Cook Islands’ for retaining this attribute ‘which is all too rare in other parts of the world’, and for cherishing the memory of ‘the greatest of our British navigators, Captain James Cook’. Her opening of the airport in effect opened the way for a furthering of this ‘discovery’ discourse, a favoured trope of the tourism industry. ‘Discovery’ is utilised by both Premier and the monarch. It is deployed in later discourse by the tourism industry to occlude the fact that the Cook Islands have stories other than European ‘discovery’, being already ‘discovered’ long before European navigation. The tourism industry retains this arrogant romanticism, connected with nostalgic images of island castaways. ‘Discovery’ continues to be a central theme in representations for tourists to the Cook Islands and other Pacific Islands.

This Air New Zealand advertisement suggests an omnipresent gaze (of ‘discovery’, possession and desire) over its South Seas paradise. (Image in Islands Business, 1998: 5).

21 It should be noted that Queen Elizabeth’s opening speech was written with prior knowledge of the contents of Sir Albert Henry’s speech.
In her official airport opening speech the Queen contrasted a dangerous and confined past where life is defined by necessity. The Cook Islands were imagined in a precarious position on reef bound shores requiring courage and fortitude to leave, but with a future of change, speed and opportunities for the following generations - in other places.

It is a far cry from the days when the ancestors of the Cook Islands Maori made their hazardous journeys by sailing canoe from other Pacific islands to reach their present home to the coming of the great jet aircraft flying thousands of miles in a day. Nothing can compare with the courage and fortitude of those sailors in the distant past, but times have changed and people are in a hurry. I have no doubt that your children and grandchildren, seeking to go to other lands, will prefer to leave from this airport rather than from your reef bound shores.

Making more explicit her role as grandmother of the island nation, the Queen reasserted the ongoing colonial nature of the Islands’ relationship with New Zealand and subsequently with the Commonwealth and England:

when you achieved self-government the Cook Islands became the first granddaughter [sic] of the British Commonwealth, having achieved your autonomy through New Zealand which, in turn, received autonomy from Great Britain. What an attractive granddaughter we have acquired.

Whereas the Queen referred to the events of 1965 to ironically emphasise Britain’s ‘acquisition’ through a moment of supposed de-colonisation, the Premier reflected back to 1901 to characterise a moment of significance for the present event - the annexing of the Cook Islands to New Zealand. Foregrounding place, as he had earlier done in his statement concerning the Queen’s ‘stepping onto our soil’, he paid tribute to its enduring qualities embodied in the actions of the past and simultaneously the present. ‘What does this airport actually represent?’ he asked.

I will try and explain what this airport really means to Cook Islanders. This airport, built by New Zealand on Cook Islands soil, ... is a symbol of trust and understanding between two governments - two nations - two peoples. ... This spirit of trust has grown between us since 1901 ... our very special relationship (can be likened to this old song)...

‘Never forget the rock from which you were hewn,
When you were hungry, it fed you,
When you thirsted, it gave drink to you’.

For almost a century New Zealand looked after us. ... This we will never forget and from it has sprung this basis of trust and understanding on which the airport has been built.

History is made this day, for today you have given the Cook Islands a place on the map as large as the Pacific itself.
The Lord shall guard thy coming in and thy going out from now and for ever more.

Amen.

In Sir Albert Henry’s prose the airport was represented as the result of colonial nurturing, the relationship of New Zealand and the Cook Islands is likened to that of parent-child. In quoting this song Henry conjured up strong sentiments relating to land, to people, and to family obligations. In the Cook Islands, as across Polynesian societies, to feed a person is to enter into a relationship of responsibility and obligation. The common Polynesian practice of adopting children is known as ‘āngai (to feed). The adopted child is known as a feeding child (*tamaiti ʻāngai*) and the parent a feeding parent (*metua ʻāngai*). Feeding children have rights to the land of feeding parents but these rights are contingent on the decision of the *kōpū tangata* (Baddley, 1978: 183). As Baddley notes, adoption is an important strategy for maintaining the integrity of the *kōpū tangata*. A pre-contact feeding relationship more directly motivated by access to land was the practice of obtaining land in exchange for food and services from the *tama tanu kai* (*planting child*) who was often adopted and recognised as an heir to the land (Baddley, 1978: 213). *Tama ‘ū‘ā* (*‘child of the thigh’*) is another term applied to adopted children, although according to some sources this refers to children with no blood ties to the adoptive parents (whereas most feeding children are related, even distantly, to the adoptive parents). Significantly, *tama ‘ū‘ā* was also a term used to describe the relationship between the early LMS missionaries and the *ariki* who offered them protection (Baddley, 1978: 184). Sir Albert Henry’s final words endow these nurturing relations with divine approval.

In the words of the Queen and of Sir Albert Henry, at the opening of the airport, it is as if the Cook Islands as a nation appeared ‘on the map’ due to the good will or nurturant *responsibility* of the parent nation, New Zealand. Both in the physical structure of the airport on the land and in the act of opening the airport, the nation building effort was made tangible. But this also involved an *obligation* on the part of the new nation - a commitment to the path of independent development; a commitment to tourism. As Sir Albert Henry articulated further in his speech,

> The airport promises to be a stepping stone in our journey to economic self-sufficiency. ... the goodwill and trust that is symbolised by the airport will give us the strength and assistance to cope ... this makes Cook Islanders here today so happy ... we can continue to remain a happy and peaceful nation.

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22 *Kōpū tangata* is glossed in this context as a descent unit whose members have rights in the same piece of land. See Josephine Baddley (1978: 144-151) for more detailed explanation of the various uses of the term *kōpū tangata* which she uses interchangeably in her ethnography with the term ‘family’.
But what does this historic relationship between the Cook Islands, New Zealand and Britain, and the fictive kinship connecting Sir Albert Henry and the Queen really comprise? Consideration of this 1974 dialogue between premier and monarch has required an examination of the conditions under which this rhetorical relationship as ‘kin’ was conceived. For, right from its inception in the latter part of the nineteenth century, it could never be described as a case of good parenting. It was rather, according to historian Dick Scott (1991), characterised by benign neglect, both by Britain and New Zealand.

**ISLANDERS AS TRAVELLERS: ‘WE ARE TOURISTS TOO’**

When I began asking people from the Cooks about tourism, particularly when I asked them to recall early tourism on their island, I referred to events in the 1970s after the airport in Rarotonga was in use. I wanted to hear about the influx of tourists coming to the Cooks and what this was like for the people living there. But in answer to my questions I frequently came upon an assertion that ‘we too are tourists’. The airport opening was remembered as much for Cook Islanders’ departing as for foreigners arriving. So what is the shape and history of Cook Islanders’ tours? The historical roots of their travel are located far from those aristocratic sojourns of English youth in Europe.

‘We are tourists. Tourism began here with Ru in 11 A.D.’ (25.5.98.).

Kiikore Charlie, Aitutaki’s elderly government representative, issued this provocation to me - the latest newcomer on the island to ask questions about tourism. He was the first of many Aitutakians to call my attention to Islanders as travellers. The history of tourism as an industry on this island might be short but there is an irony in strangers like myself arriving and calling attention to our identity through our ability to travel - tourists - to people who have journeyed between islands for generations, and who continue to travel between islands, to New Zealand and Australia, and beyond. I try to pay more attention to these assertions now. I try to suspend the urge to draw resolute lines between tourists and Islanders, us and them.

In the relatively recent resurgence of regional emphasis on ‘culture’ within the Pacific Islands, voyaging has been given renewed emphasis as an identity marker/maker for and by Islanders. Ocean-going canoes or vaka have become icons associated with the very identity of Pacific, especially Polynesian, peoples. I refer here to the cultural renaissance from the 1970s which has seen not only cultural interest but political calls for recognition of sovereignty within Aotearoa/New Zealand and Hawai‘i in particular. The need to nurture and promote indigenous languages, music, dance, art, and protocol has been asserted alongside the demand for the return of lands and seas. This has been echoed across the Pacific in various forms, strenuously in those island states which have
suffered the erosion of identity at the hands of settler colonial processes - such as Hawai‘i and Aotearoa/New Zealand. Without a history as a settler colony, cultural identity has not been linked to a cry for sovereignty in the Cook Islands. Cultural development and identity rather became harnessed to the nation-making project under the Geoffrey Henry government (see Sissons, 1999). Exemplifying the significance of culture for the nation-making project, Edward LiPuma states,

... for the emerging nation state a national culture is the most visible form of objectification of an embodied sense of national identity - central to the construction of the subject (1995: 37).

This connection of culture to nation saw the establishment of Te Puna Kōrero: Sir Geoffrey Henry National Culture Centre and a fuelling of interest in and funds for preservation of arts and the development of performance.

![Image of Te Puna Kōrero](image.jpg)


Perhaps the pinnacle of this cultural resurgence for Cook Islanders (at least for those resident within the Cook Islands, rather than abroad) was the 1992 South Pacific Arts Festival hosted by the Cook Islands in Rarotonga. This presented an opportunity to showcase the nation’s culture to the rest of the Pacific and to the nation itself. It emphasised diversity but perhaps more strongly, a connection between the island states of the Pacific.

The festival celebrated an age-old connection in the voyaging of vaka across the Pacific to gather at Avana harbour in Ngatangiia, Rarotonga. Avana has special significance. It is the place from where the fleet of vaka is reputed to have left on the voyage of discovery and settlement to Aotearoa/New Zealand in 1350 A.D. On October 21st 1992 vaka from Tahiti, Marshall Islands, Hawai‘i, ‘Atiu, Aitutaki, Mangaia, Ma’uke, Rarotonga and, a day later, the auspicious voyage of Te Aurere
from Aotearoa/New Zealand, completed the journey to Rarotonga. By many
reports it was an emotional moment as the *vaka* sailed into this historic harbour, a
synchronic re-enactment of an ancient moment of voyaging and a modern
moment of celebration of island nationhood. This *vaka* festival impressed on
Islanders, and others who witnessed it, the power and significance of the ocean­
going canoe, and the vitality of movement for Pacific peoples.23

The art of ocean navigation is testament to the way Islanders considered the
landscape/seascape and their own relationship to land and sea. Ron Mackie,
builder and crew on Aitutaki’s double-hulled *vaka, Ngapuariki*, which sailed to
Rarotonga for the *vaka* festival, spoke about the ancestral connection he felt.

> As we looked at the sea, we looked at our ancestors. We saw our mountains. They put
us back in time. We feel we should voyage, it is in our genes... The first day I started
building the vaka, I had vivid dreams, visions of my ancestors. Suddenly the necessary
skills to build the vessel came to me as I was playing around. It was as if the ancestors
were there guiding my hands, the design. They were with us all the way and when a
huge wave, higher than a tree, hit on the journey across, no one was frightened (Arnell

In the 1960s and 1970s David Lewis’ (1972) and Ben Finney’s (1976) work
disputed Thor Heyerdahl’s belief that Islanders sailed westwards across the
Pacific on the prevailing trade winds from South America with little control over
their fate or destinations. Ancient ‘way-finding’ was appreciated as a highly
skilled art, which relied on a holistic sense of the ocean, sky and land as moving
and the *vaka*, and people in it, as fixed.24 Ben Finney’s more recent *Voyage of
rediscovery: a cultural odyssey through Polynesia* (1994) is an account of
Hawaiian navigator Nainoa Thompson’s voyage on the *Hōkūle‘a* through the
Pacific. Modern voyagers such as Nainoa Thompson, states Finney (1994), have
been welcomed as heroic vindicators of valuable cultural knowledge which has
endured despite centuries of colonial subjugation. Finney’s account and the
*Hōkūle‘a*’s journeys relive and celebrate identity through movement. More than

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23 See the Cook Islands Ministry of Cultural Development’s (Tauranga Vänanga) publication *Atui
 - ‘Akaou’anga (Reconnection)* (1991). The book is a compilation of historical notes and
genealogy referring to Cook Islands ancient vaka and is the result of connections made both
within the Cooks and between Cook Islanders and New Zealand Māori at a Tumu Kōrero
conference in Rarotonga.

24 Debates over drifting versus complex navigational techniques suggest it was not necessarily a
case of either one or the other mode of travelling. The computer simulation research of R. G.
Ward, J. W. Webb and M. Levison (1973) confirmed that while a drift process was unlikely to
have brought people into the Polynesian triangle region, it may have allowed consequent
settlement to the Polynesian outliers.
this, as Greg Dening asserts, the vaka is an icon of continuity in identity, of a connecting past and present (1998: 118).  

*Vaka* voyaging across vast tracts of ocean evokes strong sentiments: courage, intent, control over one’s destiny and ability to harness nature’s powers. Despite its being an image of identity for many, it is now (and always was) only practised by a few. More pervasive was the recent experience of Islanders as travelling peoples in the post-World War II diasporic movement, since the 1950s, on steam ships and planes out from the islands to the former colonial metropoles.

Over fifty years of diasporic living raises questions about identity and the relationship between homeland and these new homes, of opportunities and struggles. What is the relationship to island homelands for diasporic Cook Islanders generations removed? With more Cook Islanders living abroad than within the Cook Islands, communities in New Zealand and Australia have become Cook Islands centres in themselves, places to which journeys are made, and from which journeys are embarked upon.

Yvonne Underhill-Sem and Thomas Fitzgerald’s (1996) study ‘Paddling a multicultural canoe in bicultural waters’ explores the changing ethnic identity of second generation Cook Islanders within the context of biculturalism in New Zealand. Their work confirms a buoyant sense of identity. They found the parent generation of diasporic Cook Islanders made efforts to emphasise Cook Islands-ness through creating cultural domains which asserted language, shared customs (such as hair-cutting ceremonies, religious ceremonies and *tere* parties) and kinship connections through church and community groups. The maintenance of these places associated with Cook Islands-ness have helped to assert an identity *away from* the homeland in addition to: reinforcement of the Cook Islands as homeland by parents, the influence of the Cook Islands Church (CICC), visits back home to the Cooks, the use of the language, and performance of dance and music. In short, identity as Cook Islanders in the diaspora continues despite the lack of a lived territorial base for this identity (Underhill-Sem and Fitzgerald, 1996: 5). Cook Islands culture in New Zealand, state Underhill-Sem

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25 Cook Islander Tom Davis, a former Cook Islands Prime Minister, has spent much of his younger life sailing the Pacific and researching ancient voyaging.

26 The research was carried out in the mid-1980s with New Zealand raised Cook Islanders living in Wellington. Fifty respondents aged between fifteen and thirty-one years were interviewed.

27 *Tere* in this sense refers to travelling. A *tere* party is the group undertaking the journey, *and* the journey itself.

28 See also Jean Mitaera’s (1991) research discussing Cook Islanders’ creation of a community for themselves within a larger New Zealand community based on multiple membership of various organisations such as *'enua* (island), *'ekalesia* (*'ekaretia*) (church community) and *tapere* (district).
and Fitzgerald, is about ‘family, respect for elders, a sense of community, and a continuing link with an idealised island home’ (1996: 6).

For the first generation of migrant parents the anchor of their identity was knowledge of their land and their memory of place. But knowledge of land is no longer foundational for a sense of identity for the second generation. The majority of the second generation New Zealand Cook Islanders stated that they would visit the Cooks but would not consider returning to live there permanently. Their heritage gives them identity, New Zealand (their dwelling place) is home. This connection to the Islands as a place of heritage and family for generations of diasporic Islanders is seen in the Cook Islands every December to January when family members living in New Zealand return for family reunions and holidays.

A sense of movement, not fixity, was crucial for these Cook Islanders. For the second generation there was a focus on getting on with things in New Zealand. ‘I hope we get used to New Zealand culture, take a bit of both cultures and come out better’, stated one participant in the Underhill-Sem and Fitzgerald (1996) study. Participants in this study chose to emphasise their ethnic identity or their national identity through calling themselves New Zealand Cook Islanders or Cook Island New Zealanders. But there was concern over the bicultural direction of New Zealand society and the place for Cook Islanders within such a context. ‘If the Māori can push themselves ahead, good; but let us row our own canoe’ stated one respondent.29

In 1998 another journey of identity took place between New Zealand and the Cook Islands. For the first time a group of Cook Islands artists from New Zealand took their exhibition - *Paringa 'Ou: something old, something new. A spiritual journey towards a contemporary vision* - to the Te Puna Kōrero: Sir Geoffrey Henry National Culture Centre in Rarotonga. The exhibition explored a number of personal themes for the artists but wove a common thread of connection. Connection between places - New Zealand and the Cook Islands, connection

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29 Loomis (1990: 129-137) states that Cook Islanders’ (and other Pacific Island groups’) perceptions of themselves in New Zealand society have been altered by socio-political events. These include: the restitution of the political significance of the Treaty of Waitangi, the Fijian coups of the 1980s, as well as the popularised link between Polynesian identity and violent crime, negative stereotyping of the Pacific Islanders associated with the overstayer controversy of the 1970s and 1980s, and concern over race conflict and Māori activism. Confronted with the bicultural movement in the 1980s, Cook Islanders in New Zealand responded by strengthening solidarity at the various levels of village, island, or nation, (most noticeable in cultural performances), differentiating themselves from other ethnic groups but making alliances with the broader Pacific Islands community, such as the Pacific Islander advisory committees. See Loomis (1990), Pearson (1990), Spoonley, Pearson and MacPherson (eds.) (1991), Spoonley (1993) and (1997), Marotta (2000) for further discussion of the bi/multicultural debate in New Zealand and the implications of this for *Tagata Pasifika* (Pacific Islanders).
between times - of the ancient and the (post) modern, and connection of people to sea and land. It traced a movement in a physical sense of people and artwork from New Zealand to the Cook Islands but also in a spiritual and symbolic sense, expressed through the content of the art and through presence of the artists and their art in the islands of their forebears. Some of the artists accompanied the exhibition.

Artist Ian George, who co-curated Paringa ‘Ou with Johanna Wilson, states:

As New Zealand-Cook Island artists we are exploring the duality we find ourselves in. Many of us were born in New Zealand; some have never been to the Cook Islands. So this journey of our artwork takes on a special significance. It is a spiritual return to our 'home' (Paringa ‘Ou exhibition information, 1998).

Artist Ani O’Neill states,

'[My work connects] ... the traditional Pacific with the contemporary urban cultures vibrant in New Zealand' (Paringa ‘Ou exhibition information, 1998).

Her art brings a sense of a cosmopolitan pace to her vision of life in the Cook Islands: boldly embroidered hibiscus flowers which she likens to the whirling wheels of motor scooters on Rarotonga, stuffed fabric Tangaroa30 doll, and giant lace mūmū31 hanging in the window like grandiose curtains.

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30 Tangaroa is a Polynesian deity associated with the sea. Tangaroa has become a meta-symbol for the Cook Islands appearing on the national currency, on T-shirts, signs, and carved for tourist art and jewellery.

31 Mūmū refers to the ‘Mother Hubbard’ style dress worn by Pacific Islands women in the nineteenth century. Stylised versions of this dress continue to be worn by older women for formal occasions.
Joel Bonnemaison (1985) in his study of Tangoa, Tanna and central Pentecost in Vanuatu, has characterised identity as being more fluid than place-bound. Rather, it is forged from the relationship between person and place. Bonnemaison refers to cultural identity as being like a ‘tree’: rooted in the earth but with the potential to be transformed into a canoe and paddled away for journeys. I will further consider this notion of rooted-ness and routed-ness in later chapters. For now I will stress that identity is not so much place-bound as place-focused - that this
relation between dwelling/moving is true regardless of where one lives. We see from Underhill-Sem and Fitzgerald’s study that for those second generation Cook Island New Zealanders/New Zealand Cook Islanders attachment to New Zealand as their home is a strongly expressed sentiment. For both diasporic Cook Islanders and for those dwelling in the Cooks much is made of personal and family journeying.

![Vaka are celebrated as part of life in Aititaki’s annual lagoon vaka race. (Kristina Jamieson, 1998).](image)

Teina Bishop, Aitutakan owner/operator of Bishop’s Lagoon Cruises, was adamant that I understood Aitutakians, Cook Islanders, and Polynesians, as tourists. Using the examples of Aitutakian voyaging legends he saw tourism simply as ‘people going to places’. Linking the ancient past with the present to make the point even more salient, he used his own marriage to his Australian wife as an example of the continuing importance of tourism to peoples’ lives on the island.

We have had tourists for thousands of years. I mean, how did we get over here? We are tourists on this island. The element of people wanting to see other places, it is built in us Polynesians. I mean there is a story of the ‘Are Karioi. There is only one ‘Are Karioi in the Cook Islands, and that’s here. There is a story about a husband and wife that were living in Tahiti and the husband wanted to come here to know about this place. See, he was a tourist - people going to places. This was a house of entertainment, he’d heard about this house of entertainment and he came here and the wife followed him and killed herself. Now that’s an historical element of our tourism history. Tourism didn’t start when the bloody white man came over here and started living at the Rapae.32 No, to me tourism started years ago. See, our line of family...

32 The Rapae Hotel was the government owned hotel on Aitutaki. It was closed up, in a state of disrepair and for sale when I saw it in 1998.
You know the history of Ru, the first canoe that came here with the maidens? Now there was a guy that came from Tonga many years ago and married one of the maidens from Ru’s canoe. That’s how our family came about. Well, he was a tourist. He came to this island and got married … Well, it’s like my wife came to this island and got married to me, x amount of years later. It’s the same concept - it’s tourism (16.6.98.).

There is no doubt that Cook Islanders, though ocean voyagers for millennia, have also become tourists - tourists, in the sense of their engagement in the globalised industry of commodified travel. Tourists, in the sense that they are travellers making circular journeys - to out there and back again. Tourists, in the sense of visiting other places for reasons of recreation, and consumption. But tourism out from the Cook Islands to other places has a particular style - a specific mode of travelling through space, visiting and homecoming.

Several people I spoke with told me about their own experiences of tourism as part of tere parties. Tere in this sense is translated in the Cook Islands Maori dictionary (1996) as ‘under way, sail along, swim along, journey along, travel, go’ or as ‘a trip or voyage’. For many Cook Islanders travelling is often undertaken accompanied, or preferably as part of a group. Often organised as church groups or dance groups, groups of people embark on trips which involve fundraising, staying with relatives and social activities such as feasting and dancing. Dance troupes, especially since the 1960s, have engaged in tere parties, both within the Cooks and overseas. Trips are often taken to extended family in New Zealand and Australia, but are also taken to Europe, the United States and Japan (the Betela dance troupe travelled to Japan for the first time in the 1960s). When trips are taken overseas, shopping for clothing and other goods not as readily available or as cheap in the Cooks, and sightseeing, are also referred to as significant features of the trip, especially among younger people. But sociality within the group and with host family members is most often cited as the main emphasis of the tere party.

Joan Rolls, owner of a gallery and craft shop on Rarotonga has experienced living between islands herself. Her father was English and her mother from the northern group of the Cook Islands. She grew up in Rarotonga, finished high school, went to teachers’ training college in New Zealand, and then worked in Australia before settling in Rarotonga to work for the family business. Joan spoke about tere parties within the Cooks. She perceives them as valuable for exchange between Islanders and as a way of breaking the social isolation of living on a small island.

You know, people now still have tere parties who will come from Mangaia to Penrhyn - this happened last year. They stop work and they don’t do anything because they have to entertain the people that come to the islands and I think that has tremendous value for the people who live on a small island - you know it brings interest, it brings change, it brings social interaction with people that have a different sort of background and it is very important that that part is still experienced (13.10.98.).
Doreen Kavana Boggs who has lived much of her early adult life in Hawai‘i working as a dancer, spoke about the motivation for *tere* parties as an opportunity to travel. But she indicated an associated risk for those young Cook Islanders who venture overseas with dance parties.

To travel - that’s what it is. It’s an opportunity to travel and see all these places, which is good. But think about it carefully you know, it’s fine to go and visit these places but how much are you putting yourself in debt? A lot of it is ... a lot of debts, they come back with a lot of debts, and some come back with no jobs (2.11.98.).

She also emphasised the cost of the visit for the Islanders who are being visited.

It’s a burden for them. That’s what it is. It’s really sad. So a lot of these *tere* parties they’ve got to really think carefully about what they are doing.

I took a group out to the islands of Mangaia and Aitutaki and ‘Atiu from Hawai‘i. I asked a group in Hawai‘i. I said ‘Really, I don’t want us going out there and scrounging off these people because it’s just their custom. They feed you from morning - you know, and lunch and dinner (2.11.98.).

Former dancer Marnia Savage also mentioned the burden placed on families in New Zealand who send remittances.

With *tere* parties going to Australia and New Zealand - they’re paying from their own pocket from relatives sending money from New Zealand to pay which is very hard. I think some of our people here don’t realise the burden they are placing on our people in New Zealand and Australia (11.11.98.).

*Tere* parties can be seen as tourism: those engaged in them leave their usual dwelling place and participate in activities such as breaking from paid work and/or usual daily routines, sometimes staying in hotel accommodation (when overseas), sightseeing and shopping - all common experiences for tourists. But *tere* parties have a different socio-cultural significance than most forms of contemporary tourism - at least the holidays experienced by those foreigners who come to the Cooks for a ten day break in the sun from work. They connect people living in the Cook Islands to those in the diaspora, and to each other in the performance of a *tere* party. They reinforce a sense of identity and togetherness through the trip itself.

In considering some contexts through which Cook Islanders travel I have tried to understand how this might compare and articulate with the tourism that comes to the shores of the Cook Islands. Cook Islanders’ journeying is connected to identity. Symbolic connections to past experience as moving peoples has been effected through the resurgent interest in ocean voyaging. This particular expression as ‘moving peoples’ has been recently celebrated at regional and national festivals and museums throughout the Pacific (such as the 1992 South Pacific Arts festival in Rarotonga which featured *vaka* journeying from across the
Pacific and the Pacific Wave festival in Sydney, 1998).\textsuperscript{33} The colonial history and subsequent migration experience of Cook Islanders to New Zealand\textsuperscript{34}, and more latterly Australia, has more tangible ramifications. Presently the diasporic population (in New Zealand and elsewhere) of Cook Islanders is approximately 60,000, while the population residing in the Cook Islands has been steadily decreasing from 18,800 in 1996 to 13,900 in 2001 (Statistics Cook Islands quarterly statistics bulletin, September 2001: 3). Journeys between the Cook Islands and New Zealand are a means through which connections are made to family and place. \textit{Tere} parties exemplify a practice of direct and indirect engagement with the tourism industry by Cook Islanders. These tours assert identity abroad, reconnecting with Cook Islanders and Cook Islands-ness in other places. They do not so much emphasise the consumption of leisure (such as most holidays by those tourists visiting the Cook Islands) although leisure can be part of a \textit{tere} party trip.

Seeking to redress an assumption, on which the tourism industry depends, of native peoples as stationary dwellers, I have highlighted how Cook Islanders are moving people. Taking common assertions that ‘we are tourists too’ I have explored what this might mean beyond drawing superficial parallels to those tourists who visit the Cook Islands. These statements do not assert sameness with the tourists who visit the Cooks, but rather an affirmation of having the skills to use the parlance and the machinations of the tourism industry for their own purposes. It is an invocation of an historical, genealogical and contemporary capacity to travel.

\textsuperscript{33} See Margaret Jolly’s article ‘On the edge? Deserts, oceans, islands’ (2001) for close consideration of indigeneity and diaspora (roots and routes) in the contexts of the Arts of Vanuatu exhibition (\textit{Spirit long Bubu l Kam Bak}) at the Vanuatu Cultural Centre, June 1996, the opening of the Tjibou Cultural Centre in Noumea, New Caledonia, June 1998, the Pacific Wave festival in Sydney, November 1998, and Te Papa in Wellington.

\textsuperscript{34} See also K. A. Hooker’s M. A. thesis \textit{Return migration and the Cook Islands} (1994).
Chapter Three

CIRCLING THE ISLAND, CRUISING THE LAGOON: TOUR MODALITIES AND NARRATIVES

...one needs to focus on hybrid, cosmopolitan experiences as much as rooted, native ones (Clifford, 1997a: 24).

INTRODUCTION

Tourists are by their own identification on the move. They have opted to up and leave some sense of routine and/or stasis at home for a period of movement into less familiar experiences and places. Of course many tourists ensure that they sustain some sense of familiarity by protecting themselves from drastically different experiences through the generic routinised structure of hotel holiday programs and tours. But nonetheless tourists, generally, move from a home place to a non-home place and a significant part of being on holiday revolves around that movement of getting to and from one's destination.

In a South Pacific context many tourists have come from faraway places, now commonly in the Cook Islands, from Europe, including the United Kingdom, and North America. For these tourists part of the adventure was in travelling to their island destination. Once there, being on holiday in this perceived remote place involves further travelling - smaller journeys. Trips from accommodation to town, trips out onto the lagoon and trips to another of the islands within the group, are made by tourists within their holiday milieu.

While movement shapes the experience of the holiday itself it also guides the interaction between tourists and residents. Tourists talk to each other and to local people about their journeys. They author themselves, for this holiday time as travellers, movers from a place, to other places, and back home. Their conversations are full of discussions of the length of time taken to journey, the mode by which they have travelled and with whom they travelled. These become important points by which they identify with and compare each other.

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1 Certainly some tourists holidaying are drawn from expatriate groups and thus they are not travelling from a home to a non-home. For tourists to the Cook Islands the majority are travelling from their home countries, or if not directly from their home countries, then as part of a multi-destination holiday which begins and ends at home.

2 In 1997 the Cook Islands received 39.9 percent of their tourists from Europe (Tourism Cook Islands statistical bulletin January-December, 1997: 2-3).
There is a danger here of speaking of ‘tourists’ as one thing, and maybe therefore implying that ‘hosts’ are another. In the prologue I problematised the host/guest formula for its tendency to render the encounter of tourists and locals into an equation between the giver and the receiver. Such a dichotomy obscures the complex interactions premised on layers of colonial experience and cross-cultural encounters (this is revealed further in Chapter Six). I want to write against the trope often employed in tourism discourse and in ethnography whereby the tourist (anthropologist) is traveller, and the resident (native) is stationary. As seen in the previous chapter Cook Islanders often confound such premises by insisting that ‘we are tourists too’. Our very use of the terms ‘native’, ‘local’, and ‘resident’ confine people to the places in which our projects (and certainly the wider reaching processes of political economy) are bound. Appadurai (1988: 39) refers to this as an anthropological strategy for localizing non-Western peoples as ‘natives’. They are native to that place and must be considered as what is true of that place. They are where they are from, where they have always been from, and where they will stay. This othering discredits the ability of non-Western peoples to move, and does not acknowledge the complex and vast movements many peoples, particularly Pacific Islanders, have made and continue to make (see Chapter Two).

‘Cook Islander’ is a collective label applied to and by people from this group of fifteen islands, which came to be considered an entity last century by British and New Zealand governments following annexation to New Zealand from Britain in 1901. It suggests that they are Cook Islands bound but Cook Islanders are citizens of New Zealand, and as such also have access to rights of residency in Australia.3 Geo-political boundaries for Cook Islanders are not as restrictive as those for other Pacific Islanders, such as Samoans,4 who cannot freely migrate to New Zealand, but run the risk of being considered ‘overstayers’ and being sent home.

Furthermore Cook Islanders are never just Cook Islanders - maybe they are Rarotongans or Aitutakians; some have family connections to Samoa, or Tahiti, or New Zealand; some were not born in the Cook Islands, some have returned from forty years living abroad, some will never return. To what extent are such people ‘native’ or ‘local’? It is not my role to draw these lines, to do so would be to engage in the politics of othering. But I reiterate Clifford’s questioning of what we mean by native and local to problematise such terms, often taken for granted in anthropological discourse, but never benign. Throughout the ethnography I

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3 New Zealand was legally a British colony itself when Britain relinquished control of the Cook Islands. To deal with the problem that a colony could not legally have a colony itself, New Zealand’s boundaries were extended to encompass the Cook Islands and Niue, which both became ‘provinces’ of New Zealand.

4 Samoa became a League of Nations mandated territory after World War II. It was held in trust by New Zealand as an administering power until independence in 1962.

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have used the term ‘Cook Islander’ because that is how people distinguish themselves from outsiders. But they also commonly refer to themselves as ‘Atiuans, Mangaians, Rarotongans, and for those who return from many years away, as New Zealanders (see Chapter Two). Identity is always contestable and multiple.

While journeying is significant for tourists on holiday in the Cook Islands it is fundamental for Cook Islanders who live there. For them travel is crucial to identity. Common questions asked of each other and statements made to strangers yield information about the island of one’s birth, one’s family connections, and experiences of living in other places - usually New Zealand or Australia. Cook Islanders while undeniably people dwelling in place (tangata ‘enua’) are also people of movement. Their legends testify to their voyaging. Their genealogies tell of kinship networks across islands. Songs, stories and names speak of journeys in the past and anticipate journeys that will be made in the future.

In Chapter One I talked about the common ground (field) of anthropologists and tourists and emphasised movement. This chapter will consider how both tourists and Cook Islanders travel. I assert that tourists and local people also embody different ways of moving. These ways of moving identify each, and in some ways distinguish each from one another.

Primarily through consideration of the interactions and movements of those engaged in the trajectories of circle island and lagoon cruise tours I seek to emphasise the dynamic between dwelling and travelling. As James Clifford (1997a: 24) states,

... the goal is not to replace the cultural figure ‘native’ with the intercultural figure ‘traveler’. Rather, the task is to focus on complex mediations of the two, in specific cases of historical tension and relationship. In varying degrees, both are constitutive of what will count as cultural experience. I am recommending not that we make the margin a new center (‘we’ are all travelers) but that specific dynamics of dwelling/traveling be understood comparatively.

Here I explore two modes of touring which are not just commonplace for tourists who visit the Cook Islands but are representative of the very holiday itself, metaphoric of tourists’ experience of understanding island society while there. In Rarotonga they circle the island, on Aitutaki they cruise the lagoon. An understanding of place and people is assumed not just through the dialogue of these tours but in the very trajectories these carve as they move across the sea/landscape.

5 ‘People of the land’ is a common expression throughout Polynesian societies, eg. New Zealand Māori use the term tangata whenua.
In exploring two different ways tourists move through and comprehend the sea/landscape while on holiday in the Cook Islands, I suggest differences in how they conceive of place. Alongside tourists’ trajectories I consider Cook Islanders’ social practice as travellers and specifically narratives of journeys told to tourists in representation of themselves. How are their narratives articulated with those of the tourists?

TOURS AS TRAJECTORIES OF VISION AND EXPERIENCE

The shape of a tour

James Clifford (1989: 183) asks how different populations, classes and genders travel? What kinds of knowledge, stories, and theories do they produce? I consider this question in relation to tourists’ travelling to the Cook Islands and Cook Islanders’ travelling.

Clifford considers travel a ‘polythetic’ notion of identity on the move (1997a: 44). Conceptualised in this way travel is not overly abstract but assumes specific forms. It is grounded and embodied as a habitus - a set of practices and dispositions. We might imagine travel then as identity moving through discursively mapped and corporeally practised space (Clifford, 1997a: 46; de Certeau, 1984).

I want to consider for a moment travel of a circular nature. A tour, like a circle, is the path of a journey that turns back on itself - the point of departure becomes the point of return. The word ‘tour’, derived from the Latin ‘tornare’ and the Greek ‘tornos’, means a lathe or circle, movement around a central point or axis. The person who becomes a tourist must leave their own home, travel somewhere else for a period of time, and then return to their place of departure. In making their circular journeys tourists physically leave their place of departure, but they do not leave this behind in an absolute sense. The cultural, social and political mores of the tourist travel with them, shaping the tour.

I met Nancy Keller, author of *The lonely planet travel survival kit: Rarotonga and the Cook Islands* (1994) one afternoon in Tikioki, Rarotonga. We sat and drank coffee in the kitchen of the house of her Cook Islander husband Raututi Taringa, the Parliamentary Speaker of the house. Nancy has been returning to the Cook Islands since 1988.

Over coffee she explained to me that *Lonely planet* travel books were originally aimed at young backpackers and were titled ‘travel survival kits’. A demand for them by a wider diversity of people travelling led to their re-naming as travel guides which are written for the needs of both tourists and travellers. She stated,
I try to put everything in. The people, they know who they are, and what they're trying
to do if they only have a week.

Nancy described the different styles of travelling to which the travel guide must cater.

Let's say I'm a secretary and I get two weeks holiday per year so when I go travelling
I'm a tourist. I want to come into the country I want to stay in a nice motel. This is my
only chance in the year, so I want to stay in a nice place, eat out at restaurants, go on a
tour around the island, maybe zoom up to Aitutaki and back. I've only got two weeks
to do everything, so I'm really touring around - so I'm a tourist. A traveller on the
other hand you could think of as being... well they could be doing the same thing but
also a traveller could be someone who has longer time to spend. Just travelling through
they are not necessarily going to rush in, eat at all the restaurants, take all the tours and
then dash back home. They might tend to travel through more islands, spend longer
time, kind of blend in a little more with the people there. Rather than eat out at a
restaurant they might just go down to the shop and get some tuna fish or whatever
(18.8.98).

Tourists' experiences on holiday involves a reconstruction of how they got
around, the course taken in finding out about this new place to be known, or at
least explored. Speaking to tourists on holiday in the Cook Islands I noticed how
they situated their time in the Cooks in a broader context of other destinations
visited and of the islands they would, or had visited. In this way they traced their
routes in conversations. Countless times while travelling on the public bus around
the island, I would overhear tourists recounting their journeys and how Rarotonga
fitted into this wider schedule of flights and stopovers and longer stays. Rarotonga was compared to other islands and other notions of paradise. One
American woman recounted her experience of watching the lava flows on Hawai'i - one of the most beautiful and surreal visions she had seen - to another
tourist as they travelled together in the front seat of the public bus around
Rarotonga, passing views of the coral reef on one side and lush mountains on the
other.

Tours, (like places of accommodation) bring tourists into contact with local Cook
Islanders. Sarah, twenty-nine years old from the U.K. came to the Cook Islands
with her husband as part of a three month break from working as a paediatric
nurse. She made an eight day stopover in the Cooks on the recommendation of a
New Zealander she met while on holiday there. She observed how her former
impression of the Cooks - of all the local people being friendly and the weather
being clear every day - was altered early on in her stay. She said,

It was a colder temperature than I had expected, then it became quite cloudy. Because
of all the rain it was greener too. The climate and the good beaches were a main reason
why I was interested in coming here, also the relaxed and unhurried way of life and the
location of the place - that this is a South Pacific island destination. I was impressed by
the friendly welcome at the airport but then found out that not all locals are friendly and easy-going - most but not all. (3.4.98.)

If people had one very good experience on a tour this often affected the way they saw their stay. That is, the island and the people became ‘a great place’. Events that did not go according to plan could be forgiven or given little emphasis. If, however, people had a negative experience on a tour or in their place of accommodation this tended to mar the holiday for them. In talking to them they would continually return to the story of what they did not appreciate and use this as an example to illustrate what they felt was lacking in the country as a whole. This was often criticised as inefficiency or laziness.

The people are very, very happy and friendly. Not one person has accosted me to buy anything and I find that absolutely amazing seeing that tourism has been here for at least twenty years or so. I haven’t heard one person swear, and I was surprised to see a four letter word on a shed in Aitutaki and upset that there is graffiti on Black Rock in Rarotonga. (Jennifer, a fifty-two year old nurse from England, (2.7.98.).

Tropical islands have been represented as alluring sights for Western eyes since the writings and mappings of eighteenth century European navigators. Pacific islands continue to be understood in contemporary popular culture as paradisical and exotic places. A recent blitz of ‘reality TV’ has included a televised program called Survivor, filmed and screened last year. Weekly viewers witnessed a group of young British ‘adventurers’ pit themselves against the elements and against each other on a tropical island: Motu Rakau, in Aitutaki lagoon within the Cook Islands in the South Pacific. To a large extent the locale was left vague, for viewers or Survivor participants it was not critical where the island was situated since it was rather the generic tropical scene for the seventy day drama of a struggle by young British travellers to create a sense of community and self-sufficiency while confined to the island. Yet through their experiences (vicarious and lived) viewers and participants likely imbued this place with the very attributes of a tropical island whose idealised fictions mixed with the grimy ‘realities’ of survival.

**Envisioning the landscape - site-seeing in Rarotonga**

The day after I arrived in Rarotonga I travelled around the island by bus, armed with images of Rarotonga from travel agencies gleaned from brochures and conversations with them - historical Rarotonga, the As Always Isles, untouched paradise, the Pacific’s best kept secret, lush green, vibrant blue, slow paced. I compared this brochured view with what I saw from the bus window. The brochures suggested a place of uncontaminated purity and natural splendour. I guess because of this I had almost expected to see few signs of open commercialism, or at least I had not expected to see the scaffolding of tourism at all. But signs there were...
Tourism's presence comes in flashes through the screen/scene of the bus window like the commercials between segments of a televised movie. This island road is punctuated with signs. Every few seconds as we wind our way close to the lagoon there is a glimpse of text. Lagoon Lodges... Ati's Beach Bungalows... 'Are Renga Motel... Palm Grove Lodge... Little Polynesian Motel... Muri Beachcomber... Pacific Resort... Sunrise Beach Motel... Ariana Bungalows... Club Raro... Edgewater Resort... Sunset Beach Motel... Rarotongan Resort Hotel. As I gaze at the blue flashes of ocean through casuarina trees and palms these words seem out of place.

These are not the oversized graphics of billboards, or even the tacky flickering neon designed to catch the eye of potential punters. They are faded from the sun, some are brown or yellow, out of date - you might pass them by in an urban environment. But this understatedness is unnerving - the message seems subliminal, almost like an advertising trick itself - contrived to entice without awareness. It's here but it isn't.

The images of paradise which saturate Rarotongan tourism brochures are framed by the early imaginings of an industry pervaded by an aesthetics of exoticism. The early European Grand Tours of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, initially premised on the acquisition of scholastic knowledge by young, male English aristocrats, later gave way to a broader interest in aesthetic refreshment through observation of other 'exotic' peoples and places, and through the romance of the journey itself (Towner, 1985; Adler, 1989a, 1989b).

A growing middle-class emphasis on the value of work rather than an interest in the pursuit of leisure provided a means and an inclination for the less privileged European classes to tour in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This work ethic implied that touring could be useful if it restored one's health but was not to be over-indulged.6 However the gradual institutionalisation of regular holidays from work, especially through the latter part of the twentieth century, has seen a growing emphasis on the intrinsic pleasure of the holiday. A Western practice of mass organised viewing embraced a glorification of the imaginary landscape of nature as an alternative to the mechanised regulation and alienation of an urban industrialism (Bandy, 1996: 556).7 The practice of 'sightseeing' became all important to the practice of touring. The tourist gaze was pre-focused and framed through the reading of travel literature - travel and adventure monographs, guidebooks and promotional brochures. As cultural geographer, Barbara Weightman states,

6 The initial Thomas Cook excursions in England and the French paid vacation were early forms of more accessible tourism (Nash, 1996: 1-2).

7 Such scenic tourism has been linked to the contemporary environmentalist movements and to styles of tourism referred to by the industry as 'eco', 'nature' and associated with this, 'heritage', 'cultural' and 'ethnic' (Bandy, 1996: 556).
The tour brochure directs expectations, influences perceptions, and thereby provides a preconceived landscape for the tourist to ‘discover’ (Weightman, 1987: 230).

Such a landscape was preconceived for potential tourists to the Cook Islands in the early years of last century by Irish born travel writer Beatrice Grimshaw. She wrote prolifically of ‘exotic’ life in the South Seas for intrigued audiences ‘back home’ in Europe and Australia. In the Strange South Seas (1907), her most extensive account of her travels in the Cook Islands, and also Tahiti, Niue, Tonga, Samoa and New Zealand, represented the Other tropical place in stark contrast to her European home and that of her readers. Narrative scenes unfurled secrets and the beauty of the islands to an audience reminded constantly by Grimshaw of their incarceration in the gloom of industrial Victorian England;

On one side rises the forest, green and rich and gorgeous beyond all that the dwellers of the dark North could possibly imagine, and opening now and then to display picture after picture, in a long gallery of magnificent mountain views – mountains blue as the sea, mountains purple as amethyst, mountains sharp like spear heads, towered and buttressed like grand cathedrals, scarped into grey precipices where a bat could scarcely cling, and cloven into green gorges bright with falling streams (Grimshaw, 1907: 74).

Grimshaw offered the inaugural view of the Cook Islands aimed specifically at a tourist market. Her brochure, Islands of the Blest published in 1911 by the Union Steam Ship Company of New Zealand, represented Rarotonga as a place possessing ‘every beauty of the larger and more famous Islands’, of Hawai’i and Tahiti, beauties which Grimshaw asserted must indeed be seen to be known.

Grimshaw projected Rarotonga’s beauty as untamed and primitive. The Rarotongan landscape she viewed as having been created by ‘some giant ocean god’ casting a ‘light green ring-shaped garland’ upon the ‘turquoise sea’ like a ‘festival wreath’, thrusting purple lances’ of peaks into the heavens, drooping garlands’ of sunlit green and flying wreaths’ of cloud. Against this dynamic backdrop of aesthetic splendour, she situated ‘sweet-eyed’ natives ‘whose lives are one long dream, one endless holiday’. She created a destination in which the scenery was everything, and the people altogether secondary; their ‘charm’ to her seemed to be in their other-timeliness. To Grimshaw their lives ‘run on much as (they) did fifty years ago’, and as such the island was not an ‘over-civilised’ place but a ‘paradise of laziness’.9

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8 Beatrice Grimshaw’s accounts of life in the ‘strange South Seas’ were originally serialised as articles in The Sydney Morning Herald. She resided in Australia and Papua New Guinea for many years.

9 I draw here on the work of Margaret Jolly (1997) who writes of Grimshaw’s eroticisation of Polynesian women through her writing and her association of their beauty with the beauty of nature.
In a similar vein to her novels, in which Polynesian women invited adventurous white men to colonise (Jolly, 1997: 110), Grimshaw’s voyeuristic text here lured a New Zealand or Australian male traveller with a sense of ‘Treasure Island’ romance. In the strange South Seas (1907), as well as presenting detailed and highly aestheticised descriptions of landscape and people, Grimshaw offered ‘practical details about island life’ and suggestions for how to make a living to potential young white male colonists who Grimshaw implored to come and settle. She wrote;

... the South Sea Islands hold out hands of peace and plenty, begging humbly for a respectable white population (1907: 53).

She presented a place ripe for the colonial picking. Food was free to all, and the natives were friendly and beautiful. But beware, she warned, further melodramatising the seduction,

O traveller ... you are in danger ... others beside you have heard that call of the coral reef, and listened to it too long ... now they will never go home again. The Islands have them and will hold them, they have taken wives from among the beautiful brown Island girls and forgotten the blue-eyed lassies who wait at home; they sleep on native plaited mats, and eat from broad green leaves, and do not know or care how the lost world of society and politics may sway, far beyond the empty sea’s blue rim (1911: 6).

Although the colonial agenda of settlement in this ‘New Zealand tropical province’ is apparent in Grimshaw’s narrative her advice in her brochure to these spell-bound Antipodean men who ‘sit silently smoking and looking out to sea’ was not to sit for too long but to get sight-seeing.10

Returning the reader to port from this vicarious but potentially actualised journey through tropical paradise, Grimshaw’s text abandoned imagery of vivid colour, the dramatic actions of gods, and the alluring torpor of the South Sea Islander. ‘The blue seas have turned grey’, the sky is ‘dull’ and we are returned to more temperate climes and ‘the world of ambition, hard work and unrest’. Her final comment reads almost as a confession that ‘the islands of the blest’ are a dream. The admission is that the reader had been in the realms of fantasy with Grimshaw. It is this imagined place - the dream - in which the reader/tourist is asked to believe and, indeed, invest.

Beatrice Grimshaw’s representation is an important historical precursor which has helped to construct images of these islands as an exotic and paradisical place awaiting visitation. She drew heavily on the rhetoric of travelling rather than tourism, enticing prospective voyagers to the Cook Islands with a vision of

10 Graham Dann (1989, 1999: 161) asserts that travel literature and brochures while differing in style and genre share a promotional premise. Travel literature, rather than replacing travel with vicarious experience whets the appetite for touring.
beauty and a promise of remoteness, untouched by the hordes of either tourists or settler colonists.

1920s postcards from Rarotonga depicting gracefully posed dancers surrounded by the ‘natural’ beauty of the island’s plants (From W. Coppell’s slides courtesy of M. Coppell).

Although no contemporary promotional literature can pretend that any place is untouched, nor that travelling has not become a mass industry, the myth of destinations as paradisical, untouched places persists. Lutz and Collins’ (1993) analysis of the images represented in American magazine, National Geographic found the Pacific to be portrayed according to American romantic popular consciousness as ‘one of the last unpolluted areas of the world’ (1993: 133). 11 National Geographic’s images of Polynesia and Micronesia emphasising women’s beauty and sexuality in contrast to an interest in Melanesian men’s facial decoration seem to repeat Grimshaw’s dichotomy, a Euro/American fantasy of a primordial Pacific of beauty and savagery.

Cook Islanders experience, among others, the misrepresentation of their hospitality as smiling and compliance. They say the experience to have as a visitor to the Cooks is to be included. Not to make the effort to include visitors in daily activities is to act against a fundamental concept which encourages

11 Images of Polynesia in National Geographic evoked romance and sensuality but to maintain readership, Lutz and Collins stress, the magazine also needed to allude to a darker side of degradation and danger associated with the third world and in keeping with America’s imperialist relationship in the Pacific (1993: 134). Danger and degradation are not the images for selling destinations to tourists.
generosity towards newcomers *aro'a* (Rere, 1976). *Aro'a* - to welcome, offer good wishes, have sympathy for, kindness or forgiveness towards - denotes generosity in conducting relationships with others, and carries with it an expectation that at some time, in some way, *aro'a* will be returned (Buse with Taringa, 1996: 76; Crocombe, 1976).

Papatua Papatua, a prominent cultural expert, former champion dancer, and now tourism authority representative explained what is important for people to experience when they come on holiday to the Cook Islands.

[The tourists who] have a good time are the ones who say 'we met people on the road and people gave us food and people asked us to be involved in *taro* patches and people walked along the back road and invited us to join'. This is an experience for them (17.12.98.).

But *aro'a* has of course been essentialised throughout recordings of culture contact. The texts of explorers, missionaries, traders and other colonial agents abound with images of friendly islanders (women in particular) - seemingly only too pleased to accommodate the every desire of the European newcomer (see Jolly, 1997). These representations sit in contrast to representations of cannibalism and savage warfare. This misrepresentation of *aro'a* still pervades tourism brochures and travel literature. Popular travel writer Paul Theroux’s *The happy isles of Oceania: paddling the Pacific* (1992) casts the entire Pacific as a collection of benignly beaming natives - still awaiting the arrival of intrepid troupers like himself to discover their timeless beauty and simply happy way of life. The acquiescence of the smiling islander in these representations is the cue for the action on the part of the newcomer.

In his chapter about Aitutaki Theroux dismisses much of what he is told about Islanders’ lives with mildly disparaging remarks about their drinking, churchgoing, dancing and ‘busy’ lifestyles.

Still, life went on in its passive Polynesian way and somehow people managed still to dance, to drink, to smoke and sing and fish and make love… As for the dancers, they cleared their consciences by saying a prayer before every dance - then they drummed and twitched their bums and shook their tits; and afterwards they said another prayer (1992: 432).

He seems altogether relieved to have found a more suitable raconteur in the former New Zealand Prime Minister David Lange, who is also holidaying there. Lange’s take on Aitutaki and snippets of stories from his political career seem more to Theroux’s liking than those of the Aitutakians he encounters. These people are a happy backdrop for Theroux’s paddling trip and consequent

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12 Graham Dann applies Mary Louise Pratt’s genre label ‘monarch of all I survey’ to Theroux’s travel prose (1996: 162).
monograph. Theroux conflates large bodies with an abundance of happiness and implies a lack of complexity and even intelligence amongst the Cook Islanders he met.

I arrived late at night [in Rarotonga] in a cold drizzle and was watched by heavy Maori-looking people with big fleshy faces, large and not very dexterous hands, and bulky bodies. They looked like unfinished statues and were handsome in the same sculptural way, with broad open faces and big open feet. Every adult, whether man or woman, had a rugby player’s physique (1992: 411).

Fat people greeting even fatter arrivals - happy families (1992: 412).

Another day in Fatland - fat men, fat women. The fattest was the Queen’s Representative, an older man - perhaps seventy - in a very tight Hawaiian shirt, a button missing where his belly bulged. This was Tangaroa Tangaroa, QR. In spite of his titles he was a simple soul (1992: 432).

Theroux’s essentialised notions are not unique. Travel writer Kate Llewellyn’s account of the 1992 South Pacific Arts Festival held in Rarotonga in her _Lilies, feathers and frangipani_ (1993) also views Cook Islanders in terms of simplicity but also authenticity. She constructs a modernity (her own) that threatens their tradition. To her these people are tradition. She writes;

... this event was a whirl of feathers, drums and music... each group seemed so very happy. I thought of the pride of the Olympics but this seemed slightly different: more to do with grace and history. Of course that exists in the Olympic Games too but this, I think, had some innocence, some simplicity - a past that they could rescue and could celebrate. Certainly for some it is still relevant today. But now there are few places without television and Coco-cola (1993: 126).

Representations of the Cook Islands, and Pacific islands in general, by travel writers and tourist industry discourse often draw on assumptions of difference based on colonial and racist attitudes. Tourism’s mass marketing of commodities and services is founded on a global articulation of images of an anti-modern romanticism.

Tourism constructs a lens for imaginary landscapes (Bandy, 1996). It is the business of branding places as views. Almost a century after the publication of Grimshaw’s promotional text, the _Lonely planet’s travel survival kit to Rarotonga and the Cook Islands_ (1994) also claims a privileged view of the Cook Islands as a place for those seeking the ‘untouched’. The text opens with a candid description of the islands as a packaged product awaiting consumption:

The tiny and remote Cook Islands are Polynesia in a conveniently handy, though widely scattered, package. They offer something for nearly everyone (Keller and Wheeler, 1994: 9).
The package is of course narrated as one of ‘spectacular beauty’. The main island Rarotonga is compared to Tahiti - albeit a Tahiti of twenty years ago that has been spared the unsightly scars of modernity. In a style echoing Grimshaw the landscape is endearingly adorned with paradisical attributes by the unseen hand of a personified ‘nature’ who has cloaked the mountains, protected the shores, and filled the lagoons for the fortunate viewing of the tourist/consumer (Keller and Wheeler, 1994: 9).

CIRCLING THE ISLAND

Telling Tales

It is Friday April 3rd 1998. I am on a bus with about twenty other folk. We are slowly circumnavigating Rarotonga on this warm, languid afternoon.

And if you look out the window to your left, you’ll see a flat-topped mountain.

Our bus idles on the side of the outer road that circles Rarotonga as Sue tells another story.

We turn away from gazing out to sea and there is the mighty mountain arched in the morning sun. It forms a formidable backdrop to the Arorangi village Church of the Latter Day Saints.

... Well, that’s the mountain that we call Rae Maru. It used to have a peak in the old days. So the story goes, the people from this district Puaikura were the envy of other villages as Maru hid the sunrise and gave them more time to sleep in the mornings.

Stories of Maru’s grandeur spread to people on the island of Aitutaki.

‘Has anyone been to Aitutaki?’ She shifts register from teller to inquirer.

Shrugs all round, but a couple of honeymooners up the back smile and nod.

Well, you two will know and the others of you, if you do go, you’ll see that Aitutaki is virtually a flat island.

I smile at her levelling of Aitutaki - the pearl in the oyster of the tourist brochures - the place of the fabled expansive turquoise lagoon. The telling of stories says much about the position of the storyteller. Beauty is in the island of the beholder.

... Chiefs there called their strongest warriors and had them build huge canoes and carve specialised tools. They prayed to their god Rongo and set off on a voyage to Rarotonga. Arriving in the evening they sighted the island of Rarotonga and the mountain Maru. When it was dark they paddled round to Puaikura and approached land through the dangerous inlet.

I notice that several of the intrigued audience turn in their seats and look toward the dark reef passage out the other window. Giant vaka paddled by giant Aitutakians wielding enormous adzes and spears might make their way toward us.
... The people of Puaikura slept on as the invaders crept ashore and began cutting into the mountain, Maru. This was hard work but together they laboured and succeeded in severing the top off the mountain. The harder part was carrying the pieces of mountain to their waiting canoes. They grunted and groaned and these sounds wakened the villagers below. Puaikura warriors were sent inland to investigate and they saw the terrible sight of their beloved mountain being carried away. They gave chase but the Aitutakians were too fast. They escaped with the top...

Sue pauses for breath and checks her audience. We are enthralled for the most part, gazing up at Rae Maru. I wonder that she isn’t bored with retelling the myth but she narrates with vigour, revealing her place in the story as she tells it.

...but, they didn’t get it all. In their hurry to get to the canoes they dropped pieces of Maru and we can see this at the place called Black Rock. When they arrived back in Aitutaki they also dropped pieces of Maru into their lagoon - it’s the same black rock and you can see it there today. This is why their mountain is so small - it is really only the top of our mountain. Aitutakians will tell you proudly that it is theirs. They call it Maunga Pu - top of the mountain. But the truth is that they stole it.

... And what of the people of Puaikura - well we found that with an earlier sunrise we could catch more fish.

**Rarotonga as a circle**

On Rarotonga (the main destination for tourists to the Cook Islands) the circle island tour is a primary means of familiarising newcomers to the island. Travel guides - the ‘maps’ used by most tourists to point out what to do and where to go on holiday - emphasise the circle island tour as a must-do. John W. McDermott’s 1979 travel guide, *How to get lost and found in the Cook Islands*, utilises it as method for his chapter entitled ‘How to appreciate Rarotonga’. The best way of appreciating Rarotonga, he writes, is to fly over it, but the most popular way is to do a circle island tour. McDermott introduces the reader to various island characters - expatriate writers and artists, politicians and traditional leaders, interspersed between descriptions of the geographic features at various points around the island.

Circling the island of Rarotonga, given enough time, can be a most satisfying adventure. Sweet land. Sweet people (McDermott, 1979: 100).

To appreciate Rarotonga it seems one must circumscribe it.

The *Lonely planet* also uses the path of ‘around the island’ as a motif for explanation of what Rarotonga is all about. ‘Most island attractions are on or near the coastal road that encircles Rarotonga’ (Keller, 1994: 96). The section entitled ‘Around the Island’ follows the Ara Tapu - the main coastal road - in an anti-clockwise direction beginning at Avarua and indicates the number of kilometres from Avarua at each site for the reader. Readers can vicariously encircle and consume the island prior to their actual journey. But readers are also informed
that if they want to see another side to the island - insights ‘you’ll never learn if you simply go around on your own’ [sic] (Keller, 1994: 108) - they should take a circle island tour on the Ara Metua - the old inland road.

McDermott’s advocacy of seeing the island from an ‘on high’ perspective ensures that the circular shape of the island can be seen, and as such the place can be considered in its entirety. This is mirrored in the trope of describing its features from one point all the way round to that point again. This embodied and textual circumnavigation conveys a sense that nothing has been missed. The island is contained in a circle and seemingly more knowable in this form. Though travel guidebook writers are certainly not the only essentialists of place, like the industry they nourish, their representations are widely consumed and pervasive. Travel guidebooks play a vital role in mapping the paths of tourists, and in shaping that experience in advance.

The late entrepreneur Hugh Henry, nephew of the first Premier Sir Albert Henry, began operating his own circle island tour of Rarotonga in the 1970s. Hugh Henry and Associates continues as one of the more successful tour operators on the island today. Their partner tour operator, Raro Tours, continues Hugh Henry’s legacy. The distinctive red and white buses revolve daily round Rarotonga on tours, airport runs and a free school run. A handful of other tour operators run circle island tours at any given time on Rarotonga but the only other long-stayer operating regularly during 1998 is the Cook Islands Cultural Village which runs a popular circle island tour alongside its village tours.

Circle island tours of Rarotonga commonly take place by bus (although some tours take smaller groups by car). Most tourists make their own way to the bus from their hotels, although some pay extra to be transported there. The tours take two to three hours (an afternoon, or for some tours, a morning) to travel round the island - a distance of thirty-two kilometres. A continuous commentary by a guide is given for the duration of the tour, and depending on the company the guide may also be the bus driver. Sites on both the outer and inner roads are visited but emphasis is given to the Ara Metua (inner road) which is less known about by most tourists in their daily movements while on holiday.

The tours wind their way around the island interspersing juxtaposed information about quotidian life in the Cook Islands with remnants of mainly colonial history. Sights from the bus window such as banana trees and taro plantations are used as cues by the tour guide for descriptions of daily subsistence living on the island such as growing taro, bananas, feeding pigs. The sight of concrete slabs - the

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13 See Chapter One for a discussion of anthropologists’ historical representations of place and Chapter Four’s examination of tourism industry construction of paradise with regard to tropical island weddings.
beginnings of house foundations lying on a cleared patch of land leads to comment about the claims made on land by Cook Islanders living overseas - the concrete foundations are laid to secure land from the family for later house building. Passing the derelict and unfinished Sheraton hotel tourists hear that land is inalienable but leased to the government, individuals and businesses. Passing through coastal villages a comment is made about the movement of peoples down from the hills to the coast on conversion to Christianity.

Buildings such as Parliament and the National Cultural Centre illustrate Rarotonga’s position as the seat of the nation - the subsequent commentary gives an outline of the political system stressing a Westminster style of government and hints at a residue of British colonialism present in the Cook Islands. On the Ara Metua some marae are pointed out as they are passed. Some tours stop at marae and tourists look at the rings of overgrown stones. It is stressed that marae are not to be walked on, but that photographs may be taken - they are.

The Cook Islands Christian Church at Matavera is a popularly photographed site for tourists on circle island tours. Its ancient appearance (it still has its original thick stone walls) appeals to tourists who seek a sense of authenticity through reference to continuation of past times. (Kristina Jamieson, 1998).
Some circle island tours stop at Avarua Cook Islands Christian Church where the gravestone of Sir Albert Henry can be visited and photographed. (Kristina Jamieson, 1998).

Indeed, the presentation of commentary from point to point around the circular path of the island road means that information is conveyed as it appears at the bus window. Stories unfold en route as the bus moves around the island. To the tourists on the bus this circular narrative journey is Rarotonga, and magnified out, to many of them, it is the Cook Islands - an other place than home. Shai, a twenty-three year old Israeli student, stated;

I go on a tour such as this to get to know the place. I like to see things that I won’t see in my homeland or in other places. (3.7.98.)

Ben, a twenty-five year old English student, reflected;

Being driven round the island the things that struck me most were the beautiful mountains and the diversity of life, also the lagoon is amazing, if not a little overfished. The people seem very relaxed, and there’s a subtle colonial tinge for example, Lord and Lady Short, 14 and their limo, but also a genuine South Pacific quality. They work well. (3.7.98.)

The circular journey inscribes the narrative of place for these tourists. But the representation of knowledge as commodified entertainment for tourists constructs a pastiche of place. Jamaica Kincaid’s (1988) A small place reflects on tourism to Antigua. She uses the path of tourists to the island and around the island as a trope to explore what they see and how they see - blinkered through the lens of their own expectations for a holiday.

14 Sir Apenera Short is the Cook Islands’ Queen’s Representative.
Kincaid (1988) writes,

As your plane descends to land, you might say, What a beautiful island Antigua is - more beautiful than any of the other islands you have seen, and they were very beautiful, in their way, but they were much too green, much too lush with vegetation, which indicated to you, the tourist, that they got quite a bit of rainfall, and rain is the very thing that you, just now, do not want… (1988: 3).

The road on which you are travelling is a very bad road, very much in need of repair. You are feeling wonderful, so you say, “Oh, what a marvellous change these bad roads are from the splendid highways I am used to in North America.” (Or worse, Europe) (1988: 5).

Like Kincaid’s narrative, the view of tourists on island tours is comprised not just of scenes out the window but of juxtaposed pieces of information about the island and islanders. It seems to create a whole out of the path they travel, and through the ‘authenticity’ of the teller, telling stories in situ. Indeed, having people with local knowledge to show the things one might miss on one’s own travels was an advantageous feature of tours for many. For Ben, the Cook Islands appeared more genuine because of its ‘subtle colonial tinge’, personified by seeing the Queen’s Representative in a limousine. His comment that this sight alongside the ‘relaxed people’ (‘real’ natives?) ‘works well together’ suggests that for him it works as a believable image of a South Pacific island - a consoling relic of old style values in a laid back paradise?

A circle island tour of Rarotonga offers a seemingly cohesive, encompassing view of place by juxtaposing images of tradition and modernity on a circular path around the island. The sense of an ‘authentic’ island paradise is suggested for tourists who want what they see explained but ultimately do not want to have their own notion of an island paradise challenged. The weaving of historical stories into a tour commentary evokes authenticity for tourists: the person telling the story is connected to the place and the people narrated, it is also a means through which Cook Islanders assert their own identity and connection to place. I will return again to the notion of authenticity and how this is constructed by and for tourists on tours. Now I want to consider the experience of lagoon cruises as a rather different trajectory for tourists in their experience of place.

CRUISING THE LAGOON
Tourists visiting Aitutaki go there in contrast to Rarotonga - ‘for something different’ once they have arrived on Rarotonga. The atoll is considered to be, and marketed primarily as, a lagoon. Information about the island is seldom conveyed without a photograph of its azure coloured waters. Aitutaki, The lonely planet travel survival kit: Rarotonga and the Cook Islands claims, must be one of the best places in the world for lagoon cruises (Keller, 1994: 58). The practice of
cruising the lagoon is the main mode for tourists’ exploring of Aitutaki and becomes salient in their understanding of the Cook Islands itself.

Photographs such as this one depicting a lagoon cruise boat moored at a motu in Aitutaki’s lagoon offer the view for an embodied experience of a day as a tourist on a tropical island. (Photo from Tipani Tours brochure, 1998).

My voyage to Aitutaki followed the lines of almost every other visitor who goes there - Paul and I were part of a handful of people flying the fifty minute daily route from Rarotonga aboard an Air Rarotonga Bandeirante plane. The majority of the passengers were islanders dressed in *pāreu* shirts, returning home with full chilly bins. There were six of us foreigners aboard.

I saw Aitutaki, as most tourists do for the first time, from above and in the distance. It appeared as a pool of bright, reflected water amidst the dark blue waters of the Pacific. Tilting the plane, as a cinematographer might tilt the lens, the pilot afforded us a privileged view as we neared the island group. The *motu*, standing in relief from the mottled, marbled surface of the coral-dotted lagoon, looked like little stepping stones across the flat water. Gazing down on the islands and lagoon I reflected for a moment on the gaze of others who came to this atoll - its first voyaging peoples. On Rarotonga I had heard about the first people to come to Aitutaki - songs and dances keep the legend alive. I have tried to imagine them - Ru’s fleet of *vaka* - sighting this lagoon. From the comparative comfort of the cabin of this small plane it’s a stretch to imagine this other sea level viewing, a tenuous stretch across oceans of time and vast tracts of experiential difference. I settled on the safe guess that the confirmation of land in the distance across the

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15 *Pāreu* is a length of cotton fabric dyed in bright colours with patterns of leaves, flowers and other ‘island’ motifs. *Pāreu* are commonly worn as a skirt or dress by Cook Islands women in the home and by tourists on the beach and about the island. *Pāreu* also refers to the pattern of leaves and flowers on the printed fabric.

16 *Motu* means island. Usually it refers to the small islands forming the outer rim of a lagoon.
water was an expected but nonetheless welcome sight after navigating the treacherous Pacific Ocean. This would have been a journey of trust, a journey of necessity - to settle and make a life elsewhere. The comfort of looking for looking’s sake as I did from the plane window would have had no meaning to these voyagers. I returned to my own topographical perspective.

Skirting round the eastern side of the lagoon our little aircraft flew over what I later learned to be the bay of a motu in which the flying boats of the 1950s and 1960s TEAL flights landed. Seeming to almost skim the tops of the palm trees of this tiny island our plane descended onto a coral landing strip, built by the American military during World War II, on the largest island and pulled up alongside an open-sided shed. We walked from the plane across the hard packed coral ground. The moist heat of the late afternoon made heavy our steps toward the waiting bus.

Unless you stay at one of the more expensive tourist accommodation places such as the resort on Aitutaki you don’t spend much of your time there gazing upon that picture postcard scene of the languid lagoon dotted with palm trees on tiny islands. The guest house accommodation is mostly situated on the western side of the main island on the less picturesque side of the lagoon between the airport and town. On Aitutaki boats for tourists’ personal use are not readily available, so visitors must approach local people if they want to explore the lagoon. Taking visitors out onto the lagoon has become a business on the island - the lagoon cruise. There were five lagoon cruises operating on Aitutaki at the time during which I was there for fieldwork. These lagoon cruises offer tourists a safe and accessible means of getting out onto the lagoon, and the mode by which the motu (small lagoon islands) may be visited.

Ru Tauranga from Vaipae village is a CICC church deacon in his forties, married with four children under five. He has run his own lagoon cruise business on Aitutaki for the past eight years. Ru’s cruise is reputed by many Aitutakian people to be one of the best - they say that he ‘has many stories’ and ‘knows a lot about the culture’. Ru says that tourists like his cruise because he goes to more islands (Papa’u, Akaiai, Tapuaeta’i and Motu Rakau) than most other lagoon tours.

Ru is unwell the day we’ve arranged to talk about his tour but he insists on taking Paul and me out on the lagoon anyway. He is coughing and smiling as he pulls up to meet us down at the wharf in his yellow and black wooden car, to which a trailer and small boat are attached. Converted from a Nissan four wheel drive, the car is an artefact of island life, a testament to adaptability and pragmatism. Ru has harvested pieces from here and there. The windscreen is an old sliding bus window from the time when he worked for Island Tours - driving the bus and talking about the island to tourists. The body of the car is painted plywood - ‘no rust’, Ru announces. The petrol tank is a plastic container that sits under the driver’s seat with a hose attached. The battery is
wired into place. Ignition is achieved by touching the ends of the wires together.

Ru backs the trailer to the water’s edge and offloads the small metal dinghy. We clamber aboard and putter out into the murky blue water of the dug out channel. The channel takes us out away from the main island towards the reef. Ru is getting into the swing of his spiel. Within a few minutes he has outlined the population and main sources of income for the island - fishing and tourism. Then he is quick to move on to the coming of Christianity to Aitutaki on October 26th 1821, an event about which Aitutakians appear to be fiercely proud.

The gospel arrived on our Aitutaki first in the whole Cook Islands. It arrived on Rarotonga in 1823. We always celebrate that day and what we do on that day, we - the Cook Islands Christian Church - we perform a story from the bible and also we have competitions, singing choir and acting a drama from the bible, to celebrate that day.

We are bumping our way across choppy water toward the motu at the edge of the reef. With Christianity he has set the scene for our interaction: a tale which tells us about the essence of who these islanders are.

He is talking about the transformation of society under the influence of Christianity. Before the missionaries people were consumed with their lives here as ‘hating, killing, eating and jealousy’, then they changed to ‘loving each other, and accepting everyone’. The ‘civilising’ and ‘conversion’ process is simplified in his reporting. ‘We did that, now we don’t do that, we do this’. It could be seen as naivete - almost a wanting to believe that all was bad and now it is good. But it reminds me of how people talk about what they do; their lives here. You drink or you don’t drink. You go to church or you don’t go to church. You dance or you don’t dance. You bring up your kids Papa‘u or you bring up your kids Māori. Ru’s telling of how society was before Christianity and after asserts this delineation of the way people live their lives here. In not dwelling on whys and wherefores it speaks of the action taken - the practice itself. Ru winds up his homily by inviting us to his church on Sunday. He is casting around for other topics, barely drawing breath. He moves from the staple diet of Aitutakians to reflections on the types of programs screened on television and the recent arguments between men and women over the amount of sport shown.

On the motu the talk turns more to place and the stories associated with these specific places. On Papa‘u, Ru takes us to his family marae - a circle of stones almost covered by hibiscus branches. From the beach he points to an ancient stone fishing trap just offshore - a bottle-neck shaped wall into which fish were forced from the reef passage. This is his family’s marae and fish trap. That it belongs to his family gives him the right to show us and tell us about it.

We motor on across the lagoon to Akaiami, the motu over which we flew, where the sea planes landed in the 1950s and 1960s.
A site where tourists once came becomes a tourist site because of this. The Paradise Island lagoon cruise moors at Motu Akaiami to show tourists the site where the flying-boats landed to refuel. (Kristina Jamieson, 1998).

Ru plaits the *kete*\(^{17}\) on which we will eat our lunch. Back on the lagoon he anchors for tourists to snorkel by the coral heads. Today is colder than it has been and we prefer not to be in the water.

Lunch is eaten on Tepuaeta’i (One Foot Island). But despite our insistence that he eat with us Ru does not. We eat and he talks. He asks us if we have heard the legend of One Foot Island. We have. Ru tells it again anyway, to show us what he tells tourists on his trip.

We are on the story of One Foot Island. A long time ago on the island of Aitutaki there lived a man and his son. Before they came out here fishing one day the father had an argument with some people on the main island. He was out here doing the fishing (where we are going for snorkelling), and the father saw this canoe full of people from the main island. He knows these people are coming to kill him and his son. Because One Foot island is the only island close to where they are doing the fishing, they came up here to hide from the enemy. Down the beach the father looks at this island. This island is not big enough for them to hide, but he got an idea. He told his son to walk to a pandanus tree. But while they were on the beach, the enemy was coming closer and closer to the island. They [the enemy] saw the two of them on the beach. When the boy started to walk to the tree the father came after him, this is what the father did. He stepped on his son’s footprint to make one footprint for two people. When they arrived underneath the tree they hugged each other, he told his son not to cry, not to make any noise, because if the enemy find him they will kill him too. He threw him on the tree - on the pandanus tree, and he went and hid. When the enemy arrived on this island, they were surprised to see only one footprint and yet they saw two people on the beach. So for the one footprint they thought there is only one person on this island. But they didn’t know that the father stepped on his son’s footprint to make one footprint for two people. That’s the courage of this man. To me I say he’s very clever.

\(^{17}\) A *kete* is a plaited basket.
to save his son. Why he’s doing this is because his son’s got a future. He’s old enough to live [have lived]; his son is too young to die; he’s got a future. He wants to save his son [rather] than saving himself. They found him, they killed him, and they went back to the main island. I just want to stop here. It is where we get the name of One Foot Island, because of the one footprint that saved the boy from the enemy, that’s why this island is called One Foot Island and also if you look from the plane, the shape of this island is like a foot.

Of almost equal importance in the telling is another story. This one is of the shooting of a film here in 1983, the New Zealand made The Silent One about a mute boy’s friendship with a turtle. Ru recalls the experience of being part of the filming - as were most people on the island. He laughs at the idea of a prank that could be played on tourists.

I always tell this to the people, you know, when there’s a cruise ship that comes to Aitutaki. I always tell the people from the ship about the plane [used to make the wind for the cyclone scene on the set of The Silent One]. The guy is thinking of dumping it outside the reef but before that he’s going to put a red paint on the wing and if there’s tourists who want to go out for scuba diving he will tell them that’s one of the Japanese bombers that was shot down in 1942 by the Americans.

The remainder of the lagoon cruise is spent as all lagoon cruises - on One Foot Island, snorkelling and lying in the sun, before motoring back to the main island.

Air Rarotonga’s advertisement of the Aitutaki day tour reinforces the lagoon - in this instance the romantic solitude of being in the lagoon - as this island’s appeal to visitors.

(Air Rarotonga brochure, 1998).
Aitutaki as a lagoon

Teina Bishop commented on the sort of people who came to visit Aitutaki in the 1980s and earlier, compared to those who come now.

I must say that the tourists in those days were more the cultural people they want to come here and they want to know about the culture you know and they really want to talk to the people rather than the champagne type that just want to come here for a day or two to see the island, go out on the lagoon, must have a good meal, and then bugger off, you know?

This change in the style of tourist visiting Aitutaki reflects the effort put into marketing Aitutaki as a destination in its own right. Aitutaki is known in the industry not for its culture but for its vast lagoon and for being unspoiled (uncrowded by other tourists, and non-commercial). Teina Bishop reflected on cultural knowledge associated with the main island as opposed to the aesthetic appeal of the lagoon.

I think it’s a shame that we have thought too much about the lagoon, and not bothering too much about the main island. But I feel that the people that are doing island tours should be involved. They should take the initiative and get the families involved. We should maintain that and get somebody who knows the history of the marae, maybe to go on the bus, and pay him to tell the story. It’s alright getting it from the guide but it’s usually a different feeling if an old man is there telling the story on the marae - that is a different experience altogether.

An effect of taking a lagoon cruise on Aitutaki or a circle island tour on Rarotonga is that each of these islands can be condensed into that experience for tourists. Rarotonga becomes a circular island. Aitutaki becomes a lagoon. This reification solidifies as tourists tell each other - summing up as they go - what they did on holiday. ‘Take a circle island tour - you get to see an overview of the whole island’; ‘take a cruise on the lagoon - its very relaxing. You can go to those islands out there and you are the only one there’. The traversing of sea/landscapes in these specified ways can reinscribe colonial outlooks of superiority and possession.

‘AUTHENTICATING’ THE PLACE

Much of the experience of the tourist on island tours and lagoon cruises depends on the rapport established by the tour guide. Most tourists are concerned with having an ‘authentic’ experience. A pivotal part of this for circle island and

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18 A presenter on an Australian television travel program Getaway, commented recently on a feature program ‘Islands in the sun’, that in her opinion and having been to many Pacific islands, Aitutaki was the most beautiful, until she recently discovered a rival in French Polynesia - Manihi (Getaway, 5/7/01).

19 See Chapters Four and Five for further discussion of Aitutaki’s appeal to tourists.

20 Authenticity is discussed further in Chapter Five. An authentic experience here is used in Tom Selwyn’s sense of authenticity (1996).
lagoon cruises hinges on the tour guide being a Cook Islander, although key informants who are considered to have authentic connections to the place and the people can attain important intermediary roles.

German-born Ingrid Caffery has for many years acted as a guide to tourists on Rarotonga. She is married to a Cook Islander and has lived on Rarotonga for twenty-nine years - longer than she lived in Germany. She comments:

I am more like a Cook Islander than actually like I'm German. But I tell you what, the German is still in me.

One of few German-speaking people on the island, Ingrid has been sought after as an interpreter for touring Germans since she arrived. This has made her an interlocutor between Europeans (especially German tourists) and Cook Islanders. She established her own small tour business, after the airport opened, alongside her permanent agricultural department job. But now she is solely self-employed, running tours and guesthouse accommodation.

Ingrid remarks that there has been a tendency for German tourists to travel in groups to the Cook Islands during the European winter. Some of these tour groups range up to between forty to eighty people. She states:

Slowly Germans are starting to come also as single people but maybe because of the different language, and I think because they are so far away, they prefer to come to this end of the world in groups. Then if they get lost or lose something, they can go to their tour leader who speaks English and German and they can make themselves understood. If they come by themselves, it is mainly young people who can speak English, or people who have a bit of knowledge of English. Otherwise I think they come more in groups.

In providing information about the Cook Islands to her tour groups Ingrid finds herself trying not only to give tourists a good time but to reconcile their image of paradise with her own experience of life on Rarotonga.

German people always have a dream. They see the film South Pacific and you know, films like The Blue Lagoon, and they see the nice weather, the beautiful sea, the easy life, and they come here and they expect a dream - to find a dream island. What they have dreamed for years of, they just come to see it. That’s all because of these stories, these films. That is for them the end of the road that must be what we have ever dreamed of. It’s just the word ‘South Pacific’, you know. For us in Germany it’s called Zuid Zee, South Seas - and that is just always warm, everything pleasant, the bananas fall in your mouth - you don’t have to work, you know something like that, that’s what they dream.

They want to know mainly how much does one earn here, what is the life expectancy, why do people emigrate so much to New Zealand, what is the health system here, what is the old people’s life here like, do they get the pension and so on and so on, the general life. Also a lot of plants when we pass by - oh what is this, you know the taro with the big heart-shaped leaves, or the breadfruit tree, you know - they think it’s
pineapple and everything because they have no idea how pineapple grows and things like that, they have never seen it, some people haven’t even seen bananas, you know. And that’s when I tell them what we cook, what we make, how we cook it, sometimes they are interested, and about the palms and lots of things.

Having an ‘authentic’ experience on a tour depends on belief in the guide having access to ‘real’ people and knowledge but also on the context in which sights are seen and the connection to local peoples’ lives. It seems to depend less on who the person is who is encountered but more on the authenticity of the context in which they are found. Ingrid recalls an incident that indicates the significance of a journey to a site perceived as ‘authentic’.

With a group I passed by Pipira, who’s a lady who is making pārues and she sells them at the market. When I go with these people - a bus load to the market - maybe three or four people buy [a pārue]. If I go to her home, we are lucky, and we see how she makes the pārues. I guarantee she is selling ten. See, that’s the difference. If they see it, that is something exciting for them, more than, you know, when we go to the market.

A local roadside shop in Rarotonga selling household supplies. Pārue hang by the door. (Kristina Jamieson, 1998).

A trip to a market is seen as a regular commercial trip, but a trip to a house becomes a genuine journey into the life of the other, of discovering how people might use their time, an apparent window into island life.

Gwen, a fifty-two year old nurse from Australia, described her experience of buying pearls and also a coconut grater to take home. The coconut grater cemented the relationships she had made with local people who she had asked about the food they ate and how they prepared it. She learnt how to grate her own coconut and make coconut cream and then to use it in cooking food eaten in the Cook Islands.
If you are lucky to have an informed guide you can learn a lot about the place in a short time. (8.5.98.)

The compressed experience of a tour appealed to many tourists. It gave them an overview and a sense of ‘summary’ of the place.

Not all tourists express an interest in undertaking tours while on their stay in the Cook Islands. Nonetheless, most tourists had an opinion about taking tours. Some expressed a desire to have the freedom to explore, and not to be rushed. Having a compressed overview might be associated by some with a commercialised view, not of life lived at the pace they imagine ‘genuine’ islanders to live. This was a common reason given to avoid tours altogether by some tourists.

Jason, a twenty-two year old English biologist, was part way through a round the world trip from England to Asia, Australia, and New Zealand to the States and back to Europe. He stated that coming to the Cook Islands seemed like a natural progression on my way home. You can gain as much if not more on your own. It’s more of an adventure on your own. (5.5.98.)

Richard, a twenty-five year old English banker, explained this aversion to tours. I would much prefer to do and see things in my own time and off my own bat. Sometimes tours that are organised can be spoiled by people in a group who aren’t really interested and also you can’t choose how long you spend in one area as they must stick to a routine. He went on to concede that some tours offer a way to see places otherwise unable to be seen.

In this case I would look for value for money, professionalism, length of time operating as a tour and also the fewer the people in a group I think the more personalised the tour becomes. (10.5.98.)

Janet, a thirty-one year old market researcher from England, commented that she sometimes went on organised tours but had conditional enjoyment of tours. She stated;

[Tours are good because] you can get more information if taken around by a local. [But] sometimes they can be very commercialised, expensive, too-organised, [there is] little time to see things, [they are] geared towards loud groups of party people. (10.5.98.)

Janet looked for certain features of tours. These are:

... small numbers, culturally tasteful, a mix of age ranges, a humorous but informative guide, [and] value for money.

David, a fifty-three year old doctor from England, stated that he favoured going on organised tours while on holiday for good quality information that is compressed into a short time (Interview, 2.7.98.). He sought from these tours a
general quality of information, insight into local people’s lives, and an experiential mode of obtaining information. Evaluating the tours he undertook while on holiday in the Cook Islands, he reflected that he had chosen a half day tour of the island (circle island tour) because it was well advertised and reasonably priced, and a particular lagoon cruise while in Aitutaki because a number of people had recommended it. He enjoyed both tours for their well presented and what he assumed to be ‘accurate information’, but did not appreciate calling in to commercial places while on the circle island tour (a comment made by several tourists interviewed), and also felt more depth was needed in the information conveyed. He commented on the extraordinary hospitality and personality of the people, the pride of communities in presentation and standards, and the tropical beauty of the islands.

A tour such as a circle island or a lagoon cruise tour is often deemed to be a worthwhile experience if the fact that it is a commercial venture is played down and other elements that enhance its authenticity and that of the island in general, such as visiting people in their homes, are emphasised. It is interesting though that tourists also measured the merits of tours by their value for money. So while they themselves acknowledged the commercial nature of the tour they did not want to be taken to other commercial ventures as part of the tour, preferring a less modernised, more paradisical view of the island.

Glen, a forty year old New Zealander, indicated a suspicion of tours in general and of the treatment he might expect to experience as a tourist.

I enjoy going on tours if we are looked after - if they care that we enjoy the experience. I look for the uniqueness of the experience offered by the tour, and also if it is of value or is it a tourist trap to lighten our wallets. (Interview, 6.4.98.)

Sarah, a twenty-nine year old from British woman, stated that for her organised tours could be good for learning about the real life and culture of people provided the tours are run by locals.

They can be exploitative of locals and touristy. I look for value for money, for tours which go to unspoilt areas, and those led by locals and not by big companies. (Interview, 3.4.98.).

She did not want to go on a tour while in Rarotonga but took a lagoon cruise in Aitutaki.

Several middle-aged tourists, also backpackers, emphasised the independent nature of their movements, in contrast to the constrained movement of those who took tours. Of these tourists several stressed the importance of the educational side of travelling. The Elder Hostel tour group from the United States visits the
Cook Islands every year. Their members are primarily interested in educational touring and make their way round the island with this in mind.

They favoured a serious side to touring. Time wasting, cracking jokes, and not enough information were common complaints among them about tours in general. Often for these professional people the holiday was a break from a stressful job but was treated as a routinised endeavour to pursue knowledge of the place of holiday. Meeting people and partaking in activities which would further their goal of learning about the place and the people occupied these people alongside relaxation pursuits. Reading material on the history - especially pre-European history - was seen by them to give a context for peoples’ lives in the present. These tourists would attend church services, read books on the Cook Islands at the library, seek out local artists from whom to purchase art, visit parliament and speak to politicians there, as well as possibly partaking in some select organised tours. Tours for them were sometimes described as an extra to their own independent learning. Experiences such as purchasing black pearls, for example, became more meaningful if a relationship to the person selling the pearls could be established and if something was learnt about the pearls and connected to the cultural life of the place.

Jan, a fifty-seven year old Australian finance officer stated that she did tours for knowledge and friendship. She connected this to the purpose of her trip (one of seven visits she and her husband have made to the Cooks) which is ‘to understand their way of life and to respect it’. She and Ron continue to make repeat trips to Rarotonga and ‘Atiu. They first came to the Cooks, like many tourists, attracted to the ease of the holiday experience there.

The package was cheap. The island looked beautiful. There was no tipping. People spoke English, drove on the left side of the road and the money is similar to our own (30.9.98.).

But these features which make for a less stressful holiday are not so important for Jan and Ron now. They are committed not only to taking their holidays in the Cooks but to maintaining more personal connections with the people in each of these islands. They bring supplies to the hospital in ‘Atiu, attend church services, meet friends for meals, and talk about local politics and concerns of the island. To them the islands have changed over the years but ‘not too much - to us it is still paradise’. The change they have noticed is mainly the rise in prices of tours and food.

**CONCLUSION**

This chapter has explored the paths taken on tours as trajectories for shaping the views of those who take them about the place in which they holiday and the people of this place. While these trips around Rarotonga and across the lagoon of
Aitutaki reinscribe an essentialised understanding of islands as simple paradises to be viewed as leisure places, they also reassert a sense of the islanders who live there as moving peoples.

While the organised tours of circle island and lagoon cruises shape the paths for many tourists, independent trips make tracks for others. Taking an independent path on holiday is claimed by some as a means of engaging in a deeper understanding of the place and people than entertainment, which is commonly associated with taking tours. But are education and entertainment necessarily mutually exclusive terms? In Chapter Five, looking more closely at the experiences of tourists who visit the outer islands, I consider the relationship of the outer islands to Rarotonga in the construction of a represented image of place and consider further how land/seascapes are articulated as sites of knowing, past and present.

Continuing to follow tourists’ paths, in Chapter Four I explore the experiences of holidaying for those who come to be married in the Cook Islands. I consider the creation of the Cooks as a paradise destination. How is a vision of a stereotypical tropical island destination articulated with the embodied experiences of these tourists with their individualised and romantic holiday values? And specifically, can the superficiality of ‘destination’ be transcended and experienced as ‘place’?
Chapter Four

MAKING A SCENE: TROPICAL ISLAND WEDDINGS - DESTINATION CREATION AND THE EXPERIENCE OF PLACE

The language of views and panorama prescribed a certain visual structure to the nature experience. The healthiness of the site was condensed with the actual process of looking at it, of absorbing it and moving round it with your eyes. Environmental values were here articulated in relation to visual modes of consumption that enabled the visitor simultaneously to look at ‘the picture’ and to plunge into sensation (Green, 1990: 88).¹

In the social construction of sights it should not be assumed that either factual or fictional have priority, rather an interpretation of both support tourist orientations (Rojek, 1997: 53).

Even though Pacific Islands are constructed through alluring visual representations as tropical island paradises they are only destined to be that through tourists’ embodied experiences of them. Combining a pre-existing vision with embodied experiences translates a generic tropical island destination into an exclusive and utopian sense of shared and owned place.

Here I consider some other travellers to the Cook Islands, holidaymakers and more particularly, wedding couples on holiday. I suggest that through their embodied experiences they imbue the islands with qualities expected of these places, and in so doing can recreate these islands as paradiatical. Discursive representations of destinations by travel agents and the tourism industry are translated into embodied experiences of places. The wedding holiday assumes a heightened significance for most participants. Notions of romantic nature, time, solitude and luxury are not only critical to image creation through tourism advertising but are recreated through experience by wedding couples while on holiday. Their narrations of lived experience in the Cook Islands not only demonstrate a belief in tourism industry discourse, but further, a transposition of that ideal through embodied practice in place.

¹ This excerpt comes from a consideration of advertising for country houses in nineteenth century Paris, from N. Green’s (1990) The spectacle of nature. A hegemonic conception of nature as ‘scenery, views [and] perceptual sensation’ was developed in mid-nineteenth century European imagination (Green, 1990: 3).
FOUR SUNSETS AND A WEDDING

Wedding tourists to the Cook Islands form a small but rapidly increasing proportion of the total number of annual visitors. Tour operators and hoteliers in the Cook Islands have sold tropical island wedding packages from the 1980s but it was not until the mid-1990s that weddings became significantly associated with the Cook Islands as a destination. A total of 282 foreign visitors were married in 1995. This figure increased to 366 in 1998, and in the past two years has jumped to reach 1142 in 2000 (C. I. Ministry of Justice, Office of Births, Deaths and Marriages, 2001).

In 1998 the local businesses which sold wedding packages on Rarotonga all offered variations on the theme of ‘a marriage licence in paradise’. To get married in the Cook Islands one needs a passport and birth certificate, three working days to obtain the marriage license prior to the wedding and to be in the country for four days prior to the wedding day.

My perspective on wedding tourism is in accord with Nelson Graburn (1977, 1983b, 1995) and Eric Cohen (1979a, 1985) who both stress the transformative potential of holidays for tourists. Tropical island weddings, promise a special and specialised kind of tour experience, premised on an exclusive and utopian sense of place. The ‘setting’ for the wedding is crucial to this construction of experience.

Wedding tourists may participate in similar activities to other tourists during their stay, such as snorkelling in the lagoon, sunbathing, riding scooters round the island, and visiting sites such as ceremonial grounds, taking tours and shopping. However, compared to most other tourists holidaying in the Cook Islands as part of an annual release from the daily grind of work and winter climates, wedding tourists also arrive with an intensely personal agenda. Their personal experience of this place as an island paradise is intensified by the promotion of the place as made for them, and amplified by their lived experience of it as an extension of themselves in a state of rapture and sensual indulgence.

Although the island is portrayed as a very sensual world - sounds, tastes and smells are also harnessed by the tourism industry in its brochures of romance - it

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2 In 1999 wedding tourists to the Cook Islands formed approximately 1 percent of the total visitor market (South Pacific Tourism Organisation Annual Report, 1999: 25; C. I. Ministry of Justice, Office of Births, Deaths and Marriages, 2001).

is the view which presides in image creation and is most persuasive in convincing the viewer that she must partake in the seeing and experiencing of this place for herself. A wedding in this place offers not only a view but a scene: an opportunity to see and be seen - to place oneself within the picture, and to construct a paradoxical permanence in an ephemerally experienced place.

![Joanne and Noel's wedding scene at Muri beach, on Rarotonga. (Kristina Jamieson, 1998).](image)

**Making a wedding scene**

The setting for the wedding is crucial to the construction of the experience; the success of the tropical island wedding hinges on an aesthetics of place. Agents who sell island weddings guarantee a sense of timelessness, suggesting the promise of eternal happiness. Their brochures present a feast of features bound to notions of romance, beauty and individualistic indulgence of the senses. Local practices often deployed in stereotypical representations of Polynesia are utilised - flower garlands, coral sand, ukulele music, palm trees, lagoon shore, warm breeze and a feast from an earth oven. But they conjoin with canonical features of Western weddings such as a white gown, bouquet, cake, and church service.

I recall the preparation process for a wedding organised by one inbound tour operator on Rarotonga in 1998:

Tangi and Ni‘i are working close to the beach in the early afternoon. They struggle to erect a bamboo arch which is bending dramatically with the strong on-shore breeze whipping across the lagoon between Motu Koromiri and the mainland of Rarotonga. I pick my way toward them through clusters of prone
bodies on the marble-like coral sand in front of the hotel. My purple and white pāreua dress, sandals and backpack out of place in the midst of these variously shaded pink limbs and midriffs exposed in this early April sun.

Eh, here she is. Kia orāna! We wondered if you’d be able to find us and I should have told you we’d be on the villa side of the resort.

‘That’s OK, I found you’, I reply.

Ni‘i, who is in the advanced stages of her pregnancy, is wearing a purple pāreua dress and flat white shoes. She directs the placing of rautī branches (rautī is a shrub used often on ceremonial occasions for adornment of the body) into the sand at the sides of the bamboo arch with an air of authority complemented by her dark sunglasses. ‘I like to use all natural materials’ she asserts.

Tangi wears shorts and a T-shirt. Her young son is with her, passing the mātipi (bush knife) and running to the car to fetch things for the two women. Keen to include me in the construction of this central feature of the wedding decor, Tangi instructs me to put a rautī in. I tuck my backpack near to a little gold spray painted round table - one of those metal foldup types - and two green plastic chairs at the side of the arch and pick up a rautī. The sand is hard. Even when I dig with the knife I can’t get the rautī in very far before it falls over. Eventually it stands. Finally pieces of bougainvillea and tipani flowers are threaded through the bamboo completing Ni‘i’s vision for the ‘natural’ archway.

The wind is blowing the arch towards us now and Tangi and Ni‘i look at it quietly.

‘Maybe the wind will die down’ offers Tangi.

We all stand and look at the arch bending towards us, and Ni‘i comments decisively,

It might fall down when they walk through.

Could we tie some guy ropes to it? I offer.

You’ll be able to see them, and that is not good.

Eventually it is decided that green ribbon guy ropes might act as an anchor and Ni‘i sends Tangi’s son to the car for the ribbon.

‘Oro, ‘oro, ‘oro!, she calls out as he lopes off through the hotel grounds.

He returns with the ribbon and Ni‘i stands back and watches while Tangi and I tie it to the arch and secure each piece by wrapping it around a short stick of bamboo pushed down into the sand. We place rocks on the bamboo sticks to hold the ribbon guy ropes in place. The bathers begin to drift back to their hotel rooms from the beach as the wind picks up and clouds obscure the sun. The wedding scene is set.
So it is not just tourists’ expectations but local creations which make a wedding scene. What is viewed by tourists to the Cook Islands through the lens of a tourism industry thus foregrounds an aesthetic of purity and remoteness. But what do tourists discover or experience? How do wedding tourists interpret and act upon what is said to them about the Cook Islands prior to their visit?

**Romancing nature**

Honeymoons, and increasingly now weddings in holiday destinations, like touring in general, have historical precedents in upper class practices in Europe. Newly married European couples in the early nineteenth century were socially obliged to make extended trips to visit family. By the 1860s the post-wedding trip was undertaken by middle class couples as well, but these couples took exclusive tours away from family to sites featuring ‘natural’ as well as ‘constructed’ wonders. Through these tours the places visited by newly wed couples became imbued with values and elements associated with romantic love and known as honeymoon destinations (Jasen, 1991: 283-313; Bulcroft, Bulcroft, and Cranange, 1997: 467).

Travel agents refer to Rarotonga, and to a greater extent now Aitutaki, as honeymoon destinations. They present to their clients a place which is imbued with the qualities associated with weddings and honeymoons - a ‘place for couples and people over thirty’ ‘to get away from it all’ which is ‘quiet’, ‘relaxing’, ‘romantic’, ‘leisurely’ and ‘worthy of ‘a six to ten day stay’. As one agent from Atlantic and Pacific Holiday Shoppe summed up Rarotonga;

> It’s golden sands and palm trees - the ideal Pacific island (Interview 26.11.97).

Discussing their perception of what tourists want from a holiday to the Cook Islands the New Zealand travel agents interviewed asserted that the beach was the most important selling point. One travel agent warned clients that they should be prepared to occupy themselves because if the sun was not shining, or they if tired of hanging out on the beach, they would be in for serious boredom.

Elements of physical nature were emphasised almost exclusively by the agents, with clients. They reported that people wanted to know what the beaches were like, what sort of accommodation was available, and wanted assurances that the weather would be nice all the time. Most agents commented that people became interested in the culture of the Cook Islands only after they arrived, if indeed, they did at all. A Wellington-based agent stated,

> I am relieved that people don’t ask us questions about the culture and the history, as this would be just another thing to have to do and we don’t have time to research this…(Interview, 4.12.97).
And a Palmerston North based agent reflected;

generally the Pacific Islands are for holidays not history’ (Interview, 12.12.97).

The Rarotongan Resort’s Internet website features wedding options. Their site states:

Rather than marry in church surrounded by pomp, obligation and long-lost relatives, more and more couples are choosing to run away to a deserted beach on a tropical island surrounded by little more than the sea, the sky and the sand (weddings@rarotongan.co.ck, 2002).

The resort’s website contains a photo gallery of couples who have bought their wedding packages.

Rae Nash and Alisdar Liddell from England purchased the Taputou (promise) package from the Rarotongan Resort and were married on the beach on the 23rd December 2000. (Image from weddings@rarotongan.co.ck, 2002).

Both tourists and travel agents emphasised an aesthetics of place infused with sun, the beach and friendly faces without history or culture. Such an image is often presented to potential tourists wanting a quiet holiday. The travel agents interviewed compared the Cook Islands to other Pacific destinations such as Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands, as places people visited if they ‘wanted culture’. The Cook Islands are represented as tranquil and safe in contrast to these other Pacific destinations - where local people are portrayed more as exotic, colourful features alongside scenic features. ‘Discovery’ of and participation in
ancient cultural practices are emphasised alongside the unspoiled beach view in the marketing of these island states as destinations.

The Cook Islands tourism authority (Tourism Cook Islands) seeks to make the Cooks the preferred destination in the South Pacific for short breaks. With this aim in mind the Cook Islands is marketed as ‘a special place, a special people, a special magic’. Chris Wong, CEO for Tourism Cook Islands, identified a signature of the Cook Islands, compared to other island destinations for the short-haul market, as lack of development. This lack of development, suggests Wong, differentiates the Cook Islands from other Pacific Island destinations, making the Cooks appear more friendly to tourists. He states;

We try to position ourselves in terms of being not as developed as Fiji is for example - the numbers of visitors that actually go there - we have fifty thousand visitors a year coming here and that is well below the numbers that go to Fiji, or Tahiti, so what we promote here - that you probably will not find in many other island destinations - is the ability for the visitor to actually assimilate into your host community by virtue of the way development has taken place here where you’ve got resorts and tourist facilities within community settlements... You will not get that in any of the other islands. In most cases they are almost enclaves (Interview, 25.2.99).

Joanne, a thirty-six year old secretary from Dublin, and her partner, Noel, were partway through their five week world trip - en route to Tahiti and the US. They had been to South Africa, Australia and New Zealand when they arrived in the Cook Islands to get married in April 1998. Theirs was one of the tropical island weddings I attended. Joanne explained why they had chosen the Cook Islands:

We’re here all up for nine days - it’s our first time to a Pacific island. We chose to come here because of what we’d heard from travel agents and the Lonely planet guidebook and also the Internet - you know, the people, the beauty of the island, and also one other important aspect - that we only had to be resident here for four days before we could get married. I knew enough before we came to make me want to visit it and ultimately to decide that it was to be the venue for our wedding (Interview, 20.4.98).

She went on to emphasise the simplicity of the wedding compared to the ‘fuss’ of back home and the special and relaxed atmosphere.

The simplicity of place, articulated by many tourists in harmony with industry discourse, was in part created by their own self-imposed solitude. Place became simple because they lived it that way. For many wedding couples this involved being away from family and friends in an effort to avoid a perceived fuss of organisation and expense back home. Escape from social and financial obligations translated into a transformation of the self in this new place.
Rae Nash and Alisdar Liddell were accompanied by just four friends from home (England) to Rarotonga for their wedding (Photo from weddings@rarotongan.co.ck).

Rarotongan marriage celebrant Nga Makirere states:

Couples come to Rarotonga to marry because they want it to be their day, and not the family’s day. When they get back home they often have a big party for all their friends and family and show them the video or the wedding album, and that way they get the best of both worlds, the romance of escaping to a faraway tropical island and the togetherness of sharing the event with all the other special people in their lives (weddings@rarotongan.co.ck, 2002).

Heather, an Australian woman who travelled to Aitutaki to get married, explained she had not wanted to get married ‘at home’.

Like this you avoid the distractions of home and it solves the problems of who you invite and who you don’t invite. (Interview, 23.8.98.)

She stressed the personal significance of her wedding with only immediate family members, and in having a complete break, ‘not taking any work’ for ten days.

Joanne spoke often of how people and nature were integral to this tropical place.

When we spent the first night at the airport waiting for the next flight to Aitutaki I noticed the warm wind blowing, the smell of flowers in the air, the locals greeting each other with tiaras, the musician who greeted and bid farewell to everybody who passed through the airport … also the warm friendly faces of the local people…

The other evening we came across a rugby team finishing their practice, and we noticed the gentle and relaxed manner in which they drove off in their cars and on their motorbikes…(Interview, 20.4.98).

Warmth of air and warmth of face infuse an atmosphere of greeting, making a place in Joanne’s imagination where a newcomer can be made to feel perpetually
special and welcomed. Her description of the way the local people smiled and moved, the elements of peacefulness and relaxation so strongly emphasised by travel agents in their narrations of the aesthetics of the Cook Islands reinscribed romanticised values she had been led to expect. Joanne brought with her a knowledge of these narratives. This was what she sought; she ‘discovered’ it immediately.

Couples not only observe but also embody the romance associated with the destination. Many tropical island wedding tourists articulate an interest in local people which they enact through a desire to imbue their weddings with what they understand as ‘Island culture’. Heather decided with her partner to be married in a church

...because religion is such a big part of the Cook Islands ... I thought it would be nice.

She recounted that she had worn a hat ‘because all the women wear them to church.’ Heather commented on another couple’s wedding while they were on the island in terms of an option she would not have taken herself. They had ‘flaming torches and natives rowing them in a canoe’.

Have we been too caught up in the visual in tourism research, to grasp the importance of other sensory experience? I think so, as does anthropologist Hazel Tucker, whose research in Goreme (a Cappadokyan village in central Turkey) considered the extent to which the physical and social environment met the imagined ideals of visiting tourists (1997: 107). Tucker found that some tourists seek closer encounters with the landscapes and cultures they visit, than just viewing. She writes,

With grazed hands and bruised knees, tourists coming back after a day of hiking and clambering through caves and fairy chimneys, look vibrant in comparison to those climbing out of a mini-bus after a day’s tour of the sights. Whilst the Goreme landscape is on the one hand a spectacle that is framed for and by tourists in their touristic activities, it is also a place to get involved with, where tourists can indulge in an almost carnivalesque celebration of the physical senses (1997: 110).

In what ways and for what reasons are the visual and other sensory modes of experience emphasised in the context of Cook Islands wedding tourism?

Although wedding tourists appreciate their new context aesthetically, they can remain strangers to local practices far more than tourists who do not come for weddings or honeymoons. They emphasise the staging of an aesthetic with certain critical features. Beaches, palm trees, water, sunsets and mountains are there to be viewed but also to be part of. Margaret Jolly (1997: 113) notes a similar aesthetic created in the film South Pacific in which indigenous Pacific peoples become a beautiful back drop, part of the lush scenery while the narrative
revolves around characters who are foreign to the place. Island wedding tourists in place embody this momentary aesthetic of a foreign presence enhanced by bountiful beauty.

This excerpt on island weddings from a magazine targeting tourists in the Cook Islands typifies a representation of place as abundant with nature.

A magnificent island of high mountains clothed in lush green rainforest and encircled by a strikingly lovely lagoon of endless turquoise, Rarotonga is truly one of the last remaining paradieses. ... Swaying palm trees, turquoise sea lapping the pale sandy shore, the setting sun turning the whole scene golden as another day at the edge of time draws to a close. (Elizabeth Raizis, *Cook Islands Supplement*, Sept 1998 - March 1999: 7)

The brochure text tries to create a sense of total immersion in this tropical ambience. The tourist, however, was never meant to completely surrender to nature, or 'go native' like those anthropologists and travellers, traders and beachcombers who never 'came home'. In most promotional literature, the sense of being consumed by the beauty of the elements is tempered by a sense of finitude. So the ‘magnificent mountains’, ‘lush rainforest’, and ‘endless turquoise lagoon’ are tinged by a ‘setting sun’ of ‘another day at the edge of time.’ Thus nature is revealed as both abundant and finite in this ‘last remaining paradise’.

**Romancing time**

The island paradise of the brochures is positioned ‘at the edge of time’. In these texts ‘nature’ is not just a generic term for plants, animals and landscape but implies both authenticity and ephemerality. This is ‘real nature’ - and implicitly what is ‘back home’ is not nature anymore. Real nature is situated by the tourism industry in another time to be experienced for a short time only. The image of islands ‘poised on the brink’ in both a spatial and temporal sense represents islands as doubly marginal. A stress on horizons evokes spatial and temporal marginality: the edge of time is the edge of land and sea - the island beach itself.

Time as concept and practice in tourism industry discourse and tourist activity has become a crucial focus for some anthropologists and sociologists of tourism. Nelson Graburn (1977, 1983b) asserts that touristic time is ‘non-ordinary’ and similar to sacred time in religious settings: tourism time interrupts the flow of profane time. He considers touring as the epitome of freedom and personal choice, characteristic of Western individualism.4 Studies using this approach

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4 Other key studies of tourism with consideration to play, ritual and liminality include Wagner’s (1977) research on Swedish tourists at a Gambian beach resort, Moore’s (1980) work on Walt Disney World in Florida, Lett’s (1983) research on yacht tourism in the Caribbean, Passariello’s (1983) study of Mexican vacationers, and Gottlieb’s (1982) work on Americans’ vacation practices.
emphasise the antithesis between the touristic moment and ordinary life. In the former, normality is suspended and the individual is temporarily freed from his or her ordinary preoccupations. Life is experienced as somehow ‘out of time and place’.

This image from the Rarotongan Resort’s wedding section of their Internet website is titled ‘Toasting a new beginning’. The lagoon backdrop, lush vegetation and the floral ‘ei worn by the groom signify difference from the home place for this European couple. The toast marks this moment in time as special and distinct from the everyday. (Image from weddings@rarotonganco.ck, 2002).

The construction of ‘now’ and ‘then’ is also related to the sense of ‘here’ and ‘there’. Narratives of home and away thus rely on imaginings of difference in time as well as space from the self. For many of the tourists from European ‘homes’ the Cook Islands was a place in a far away ocean that became for them a once-in-a-life-time experience. One thirty year old German woman interviewed spoke with conviction of having literally ‘dreamed of this place, and so I am now [in the place] living my dream’. She described images of the Cook Islands she had seen at a travel show in Berlin and marvelled at how they were ‘just the same as the real thing’. For many North American and European tourists the sense of ‘another time’ seemed very marked - since this place was so unconnected to their ordinary lives back home. Many chose to view the destination as an idyllic disconnection.

New Zealanders and Australians on holiday in the Cook Islands could less convincingly embrace such contrived naivety, although some interviewed knew surprisingly little about the Islands or Cook Islanders. Some middle-aged people remembered when ‘New Zealand was quiet and friendly like this’ and some chose to talk about ‘the Cook Island bloke’ they recalled working with back in the 1960s or 1970s. One couple returned every few years to ‘recharge their batteries’, and had been doing so for ten years. For many of the Australians and New Zealanders who stayed in tourist accommodation, and identified themselves
as tourists, the Cook Islands represented a break with present time - a return to some nostalgic past.¹

Suspension of a sense of ordinary time as well as a sense of extraordinary place is desired by most recreational holidaymakers who talk about ‘having time out’, ‘taking a break’ and needing to ‘wind down’. This is what the industry proclaims, and it is what the tourists want and seek and consciously play out on the beach. But to accept this at face value is to assume that places are somehow disconnected, and that time is fragmentary. Islands do not sit untouched in oceans on the edge of time. They are constantly shaped by a discourse bent on proving their stasis. Beaches become stretches of unmarked sand fringing island oases in the midst of blue nothingness. Further, tourists themselves create and enact these places as a reflection of their own agendas - honeymooners, and wedding couples through the ideals of Western middle class heterosexual, commercialised romantic love.

Romancing the individual

In proclaiming a tropical island wedding destination tourists assert not just a right to be there but, in a sense, a claim to own the place for the duration of the stay. This concept of being there and being alone taps into the romanticised tropes of island castaways replete in children’s literature - free from social obligation forevormore, and perhaps too the exoticist allure of the Pacific propagated by some eighteenth century explorers - of free life and free love.

Aitutaki, the second largest island in terms of population in the Cooks, is becoming popular as a honeymoon island. One of the motu or small lagoon islands is even referred to by tour guides and travel agents as ‘honeymoon island’ since couples can be transported and dropped off there alone for a day as part of a lagoon cruise tour. Several travel agents spoke of Aitutaki as a good place to go for a day trip or for two days - to get that ‘away from it all’ experience. This excerpt from a Travel Arrangements Internet advertisement evokes this sense of abandonment and possession of place:

Choices for honeymooners are quite extensive, most popular is heading off for a few days on Aitutaki, the jewel in the crown of the Cook Island’s romantic outer islands. Crystal clear turquoise waters will stun you and several of the small resorts offer Private Picnics on deserted islands, spending the entire day to yourselves, rejoicing in the freedom and warmth of your very own island. All cares and worries are forgotten

¹ This is not necessarily the experience of New Zealand Cook Islanders who return to visit family in large numbers over the summer. Although many people spoke about nostalgia towards the Cook Islands, some reported feeling like they ‘didn’t fit in’ to life in the Cook Islands having lived overseas, but family connections (and connection to land) and obligations sustained a sense of belonging to this place.
as you begin life together in your very own piece of paradise (Travel Arrangements
Internet advertisement, 15.2.2000).

These ‘free’ images come with a price. To marry in paradise is to buy a wedding in paradise. But, in consuming a wedding or honeymoon package, the event and place of the wedding or honeymoon become a lasting product. The act of consumption reaffirms the values associated with weddings. The island values portrayed in tourism industry discourse - beauty, freedom, luxury, the erotic and the exotic are retranslated as values of the conjugal couple and their destiny in married life.

Cultural geographer Doreen Massey (1994) stresses social interrelations as making places. These are enacted in the tourist context of tropical island weddings. They thus create the honeymoon/wedding destination as a uniquely personalised place. The romantic relationship between the couple; the centrality of this relationship in relation to landscape, local people, daily events, and all ‘back home’ is central to the recreation of self in place.

Bulcroft, Bulcroft, and Cranange (1997) point to an apparently increasing need for couples to identify as honeymooners in their destination. This suggests that couples need recognition to enact their elaborate narratives. This is reinforced through resorts and destinations catering specifically to honeymooners (and wedding couples). Couples recollected in interviews the things that were done that seemed especially for them, such as the type of cake the caterers had served or the decoration of tables with flowers. Rachel and Simon from New Zealand recalled the string band that had ‘played all night for them’ at the resort where they were staying (interview, 2.7.98). The resulting social interrelations between the ‘honeymoon couple’ and all others - travel agents, tourism industry workers, and family and friends back home revolve, for the brief time of the honeymoon, around this narrative of the couple in their special place - the tropical island destination. Though finite, this time has a vital sense of endurance, strongly connected to the transformation of self in this place and the making of an ideal marriage - a lasting, binding institution.

While many other tourists purchased cheap souvenirs, jewellery and clothing, the honeymoon and wedding tourists commonly rather spent their money on accommodation, meals and flights to outer islands. Their emphasis was thus on

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6 See John Urry’s The tourist gaze: leisure and travel in contemporary societies (1990). Urry argues that tourism must be seen as determined by broad socio-historical transformations, notably the post-Fordist shift from production to consumption (1990: 14). He claims that an ‘aestheticisation of consumption’ is expressed through tourism.

7 See also Urry’s Consuming places (1995) which focuses in particular on post-industrial Britain and the restructuring of places as centres of consumption. Urry’s work, here and in general, emphasises visual consumption with specific reference to the ‘tourist gaze’.

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buying products which would contribute to their experience of being alone together in their destination rather than gifts or souvenirs for others. All of the tourists interviewed were recording their holidays in some way - either through video, camera or journals. In describing her wedding on Aitutaki, Heather listed the places where she and her husband had taken photographs: ‘outside the church’, ‘then at the beach’, ‘then at the resort’. The following day they had been taken round the island on the back of a truck, ‘and got all of it on video’.

Sightseeing affords a consumption of place: the couple is able to record and process pieces of their experience to frame for the viewing of others at home. In consuming places as holiday destinations, sites become infused with the values held by tourists. This place becomes our place in that this is where the moment and the money were spent.

The process of commoditisation is no news to anthropologists of tourism. In 1977 Davydd Greenwood raised this as a significant issue with regard to the changing state of the Alarde, a Basque ritual sold as ‘culture by the pound’ through tourism. Tom Selwyn (1993: 127) states that,

[a] dominant theme [of tourism] is ... ‘commoditisation’, the gathering of everything, from sites to emotions to persons, into the cash nexus.

He suggests that this cash nexus serves to erase the very boundaries and frontiers between countries in the experience of choosing a holiday from alternative destinations. In the brochured representation of the destination, boundaries between types of information are removed. Places become lists of features of either equal or irrelevant importance compared to each other - conveying a message to the reader that islands are products and can be reduced to their cash components.

Information about food, temples, volcanoes, timetables and out-of-season tariffs jostle more or less indiscriminately for space. By rendering self-evidently different sorts of messages (a list of resort’s monthly temperatures beside a list of its religious festivals, for example) into alternative ‘bits’ of ‘information’, intellectual distinctions and judgements about the relative value of things becomes blurred. (Selwyn, 1993: 128)

For Noel, who came to the Cook Islands to get married in 1998, the destination clearly had commodity value and features that were worth attaining for one’s honeymoon experience. He reflected:

You want to know about the climate and the geography and accommodation and prices and the culture and that sort of thing ... we didn’t know much about this place other than it’s a kind of tropical island and that I thought it would be good to get married on it. It seems to have a good reputation with travel agents - they said it was a beautiful island and not a rip off like French Polynesia... and that the people were nice (Interview, 21.4.98).
This commodity value rests on an association of wedding/honeymoon places with comfort and luxury (in the sense of being an unusually decadent or self-indulgent treat- but not necessarily too expensive). A combination of nature and luxury thus characterises the tropical island destination. Pacific Island holidays still represent a break with conventionalised industrial life but the natural features - palm trees and beaches - have also come to represent an exotic freedom embodied in Western experiences of the tropical as a *luxury product* for the *self*.

Couples on such holidays described their day to day activities while in the destination in terms of this embodied sense of luxuriating. On Rarotonga they typically stayed at either of the three resort style hotels on the island and did not stray far from its parameters.

Noel:

I guess you do different things when you go somewhere on holiday don't you? We've been relaxing and catching rays, we haven't felt the need to go off exploring ... we've stayed within the hotel mostly.

Susan, an American tourist on honeymoon, spoke of spending time in a tropical place with her new husband as the most important aspect of her holiday. This lingering in luxurious places depends on how tourists feel and act (seeing, relaxing and buying). Landscape, people, luxury products and the easy atmosphere must all reiterate this lavish quality.

**ARTICULATING PLACE - DWELLING AND MOVING**

My thinking about the construction and experience of tropical island weddings derives from a premise about *place* that allows for a broader conceptualisation of destination creation and tourists’ experiences and their ensuing representations of their holidays. There is a dynamic connection between representation and experience of island weddings. Tourists having weddings and honeymoons in the Cook Islands actively participate in their own construction of the destination as their place.

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8 Recent cultural geography initiatives have contributed to a more complex and dynamic understanding of places and their social meanings. Several of the chapters in Greg Ringer’s edited volume *Destinations: cultural landscapes of tourism* (1998) offer insightful analyses on the socio-political and historical construction of places by outsiders and insiders through tourism. See especially Milne, Grekin and Woodley’s chapter ‘Tourism and the construction of place in Canada’s eastern Arctic’ and Saarinen’s ‘The social construction of tourist destinations: the process of transformation of the Saariselkä tourism region in Finnish Lapland’.

9 Milne, Grekin and Woodley’s (1998) tourism study in the eastern Arctic of Canada emphasises that tourists must be considered important actors in ‘perpetuating and recreating tourist landscapes’ (1998: 116). While they emphasise the ‘reading and communication of tourist images’ (1998: 116), I agree but insist that tourists do more than this in their place construction - they practise embodied experiences of their preferred qualities of place.
Destinations are constructed *places* and experiencing place derives as much from this moving (touring) sense as a dwelling sense. A tension between staying and going informs any discourse of place - of home and away, of theirs and ours, of familiar and strange. Tourism is about making places seem accessible to people who have no prior lived experience in them or lasting connection to them. It assures a right to commune with a place not based on routine dwelling but on movement. But in moving, an elevated sense of self in a unique time/place is created.

Philosopher, Edward Casey (1993, 1996), argues against an Enlightenment assumption of space as precursor of place, an empty canvas onto which place is mapped. He asserts that place is a *fusion* of self, space and time. Place, he suggests, is the most fundamental form of embodied experience. So, we know place as this fusion of self/space/time - not as a mapped site set in vacuous space, along a linear continuum of time. This means that place is more an *unfolding* process than a pre-existing thing.\(^\text{10}\) In Casey’s words,

> ...places not only are, they happen (1996: 27).

Doreen Massey asserts that the politics of characterising places lies not just in the specific features assigned to places but in *how* the image of place is constructed (1994: 114). Social interrelations, she states, form the identity of places. Further,

> ... a proportion of those interrelations will stretch beyond that ‘place’ itself. In that sense if social space is conceived of as constructed out of the vast, intricate complexity of social processes and social interactions at all scales from the local to the global, then ‘a place’ is best thought of as a particular part of, a particular moment in, the global network of those social networks and understandings (Massey, 1994: 115).

Massey (1994) further argues that place is dynamic and interactive, not enclosed and inert. It is this fluid sense of place which informs my analysis of tourism. Places are plastic entities - they *become* what they are represented to be. Places are not just there, they are made to seem ‘as if’.

So while the tourism industry envisions place, tourists themselves both envision and enact it. Thinking of place in Casey’s sense as a fusion of space and time and self, helps to reveal how tourists transform space/time and self in the temporality of their tour. The very interaction of representation and experience - of vision with embodiment transforms the tropical island destination into a specific kind of place for these tourists. Like Massey, I stress that the social relations of these tourists with the agents of the tourism industry (travel agents, brochures, guide

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\(^{10}\) Casey’s assertion is in tension with the work of David Harvey (1989, 1993) who characterises place, after Heidegger, as Being; and implicitly not Becoming. Harvey’s conceptualisation rather cements place and, as Doreen Massey (1993, 1994) argues, uses place as a source of stability and unproblematic identity.
books) with each other and with local people while on holiday all interact to construct the meaning of place for these tourists at this time.

As Hazel Tucker has found for tourists visiting Göreme in Turkey, these wedding tourists in the Cook Islands encounter an idealised environment, experiencing what they want to experience (1997: 124). Tourists to Göreme seek a place that is romantic and suitably ‘other’ which offers services enabling them to ‘play’ in comfort. Tucker states,

The particular expectations and ideology of these tourists clearly bear heavily on the way that they interact with the Göreme environment, and the ways in which Göreme village is constructed and maintained as a ‘tourist site’. … the aesthetic valuing of the troglodyte dwellings and way of life shows how tourism has the power to shape landscapes and cultures to its own needs (1997: 125).

Similarly, the tropical island wedding in paradise reifies place as an individuated personal memory space. The possession of place for the purposes of fantasy and the creation of memories has little to do with an enduring relationship to a lived place but much to do with a place of nostalgia for a particular moment. The tropical island wedding is an exclusive notion of place bound to a date, a photo album, and a video - a recollection of rather than reconnection to a place. For couples enacting tropical island weddings place is imbued with those qualities articulated by travel literature but rearticulated by their own subjective and embodied experience of nature, ‘island’ time and a celebration of solitude and possession of individualism in this place.
Chapter Five

AN OTHER TIME, AN OTHER PLACE: SEARCHING FOR AUTHENTICITY IN OUTER ISLANDS

Assertions of local purity cannot be written off as naïve or restrictive without attention to their articulation in practice. 'Authenticity' is seldom an all-or-nothing issue (Clifford, 1997a: 178).

I can remember on that first warm morning that hardly a breeze was stirring the coloured patchwork of the lagoon. And I can remember, too, standing ankle-deep in the shallows, looking at my own palm-tree skyline of Suvarov and saying to myself, 'Well, Neale, here you are after all these years - and it's all yours' (Neale, 1966: 55).

I was in the Ministry of Cultural Development in Rarotonga photocopying some material and talking to some of the staff there about my up and coming trip to the outer islands. My plan was to go to 'Atiu, and then later to Mangaia for a few weeks to interview local people involved in the tourism industry. 'That’s where the real culture is’ exclaimed Mama Ake, looking up from her computer as a Princess Diana screen saver flashed onto the screen. ‘It’s there in the outer islands’. Many people living and working on Rarotonga have moved there from outer islands. Mama Ake’s family are from Ma’uke (part of the Ngaputoru group). At the time I took her comment to mean nostalgia for home, family, and in contrast to the working routine of Rarotonga. But there was something else.

I was bothered by the real culture comment. The tourism industry also talks about real culture. Tourists and local people differentiating between real and not real culture, and what’s more, finding these in the same places: this troubled me. At the crux of my concern was ‘authenticity’. Surely Cook Islanders saw that the question of authenticity itself was contrived? And on the other hand, didn’t tourists just believe what was put to them - searching for some stereotypical tropical scene as somehow more genuine to how people actually live their lives? What was happening on the outer islands?

In tourism industry discourse, distinctions are routinely made between inner and outer places. In the Cook Islands what is deemed ‘real culture’ is seen to reside

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1 Tom Neale lived in isolation on Suwarrow in the northern group of the Cook Islands for six years in two episodes during the 1950s and 1960s. His experience of living alone on a tropical island earned him a reputation as a modern day Robinson Crusoe, and reinforced a reputation of the outer islands as places of solitude and discovery.
simultaneously in the hinterland and beyond the reef - in the interior landscape of the mountains and valleys and caves, and in the outer islands. These places are contrasted by the industry with the inner core of Rarotonga, the centre of governance for the island nation, and the commercial fringe which encircles it.

In this chapter the relationship between Rarotonga and the ‘outer’ islands is seen as focal to a consideration of authenticity of place and culture in tourist experience. In relations to Rarotonga and implicitly to larger metropoles, the outer islands are understood to be repositories of cultural knowledge and history. Both Cook Islanders (including outer islanders) and tourists speak of them in this way. Here I explore the construction of the ‘outer’ islands, primarily through a consideration of tourism in Aitutaki, Atiu and Mangaia.

For most visitors, travelling to the outer islands of the Cooks is seen as relatively expensive, compared to their incoming flight to Rarotonga. Of those who decide to visit other islands during their stay, most will fly to Aitutaki for a short stay - some limit this to a day trip there and back from Rarotonga. The outer islands attract tourists prepared to negotiate a holiday experience outside of a well-developed tourism infrastructure. Apart from Aitutaki’s Lagoon Resort, most accommodation in the outer islands is basic guest house style. Water can be in short supply and there is a limited variety of imported food products for sale compared with Rarotonga. Those who come seek an experience of island life different to Rarotonga. It is through their own experiences and reflections on these experiences that tourists attain a sense of ‘authenticity’ - not purely through a gaze on the exotic, but through participation.

Reflecting on caves and reefs on Mangaian edges

Imagine you are on holiday. You are reclining on a low deck chair poised on white sand in front of a stretch of turquoise water. Eyes closed, you bask in the warmth of the sun on your skin and you bask in the smugness of being relaxed and away from your workaday life back home. In this soporific state you are vaguely aware that somewhere in the distance the waves break gently on the reef, and the palms rustle in the soft onshore breeze.

Where is your imagined place? Some Pacific or Caribbean island? It doesn’t matter - we all know the place. It’s cliched in tourist brochures worldwide. It’s warm, but not too hot - comfort is assured, it’s exotic, but not too different - we can marvel but not feel out of our depths, it’s out of the way, but help is on hand - the local people are always friendly and accommodating.

‘Welcome to Paradise!’ we’re told. ‘Soak it up. Relax. Don’t think. Don’t move’.

2 When I refer to landscape in reference to Cook Islanders’ notions of place and belonging I also imply seascape (the land being islands within sea). As discussed later land and sea are equally intrinsic to a sense of identity.
Cast your deckchair aside for a moment, take off those blue blocker sunglasses, and imagine another place, also an island but not entirely of those paradisical proportions.

I remember wading into the sea. The same ocean perhaps as the one you’ve just imagined if you dreamt up the Pacific, but this water was not turquoise. It was dark and the bottom was hard to see. I swam out into the narrow passage from the shore on the island of Mangaia to the edge of the reef one September evening with Paul, his Mangaian girlfriend and some kids. The waves tugged at our bodies and our clothes. I wore shorts, a T-shirt and sandshoes, and held onto a leaky facemask.

The warm water swirled around us and I felt more than a little apprehensive - wondering about the safety of swimming in clothes, and trying to recall other times I had swum in open water and whether I could make the several hundred metres out to the reef. We made hard work of it but got beyond the breaking waves. I recall looking down at my feet dangling below me in the darkness. Way ahead I saw a change in the surface of the water - huge swells appeared like dark blue hills on the horizon. Then I turned round to face the island.

What a sight! It rose out of the sea like a great wall. Like the underwater coral drop off that we swam toward, the island of Mangaia has a second wall of dead coral, te makatea, towering like a fortress just in from the beach.

This fortress although magnificent and mighty is not impermeable. It is porous. Water filters through it from the centre, draining onto the smooth grey coral at points along the beach. When it rains heavily these streams of water run blood red from the soil in the heart of the island. The water travels through great underground caverns, tiny cracks and dark passages which connect the core to the edges. These inner spaces - the caves - are the repositories of deaths and of lives, of bones and of livelihoods - places of present, past and future stories.

I visited several of these caves in Mangaia. As I looked back at the jagged skyline of the island from the water I thought about a cave Paul and I had been in the day before, through the makatea on the other side of the island. We were taken there by Tere, a devout Mormon man from Irirua village in his forties. Tere has access to Te Ana o Kakaia - the Cave of the Tern. He tells the stories of his ancestors to his children and to interested visitors to the island. As with most storytellers in Mangaia, you have to seek him out. He doesn’t advertise, but he does charge $20 per person.

We’d walked for half an hour across the sharp makatea down a narrow track, up and up to a vantage point from where we overlooked a valley - a sea of green taro leaves rippling in the breeze. ‘I want to tell you about this place and this cave’, Tere announced. He pulled from his bag a battered book and began to read.

In the face of a perpendicular cliff at Irirua, overlooking a picturesque valley cut up into innumerable taro patches is an opening to which access can only be gained by a long ladder planted on a projecting point of rock. ... an entrance to the famous cavern.
which is known as the Cave of the Tern. Here for many a long day were the headquarters of Ruanae and his clan.

Tere suddenly spoke very formally and I thought I detected an English accent.

I was startled by Tere's narration of this place - of his reading of his peoples' story - having expected him to recount this not from text but from memory as stories which had been passed down orally through the ages. The book he read from was Reverend William Wyatt Gill's *From darkness to light in Polynesia*. Published in 1894 it is Gill's narration of the stories he heard in these places. The missionary spoke again now but this time to the tourist/anthropologist.

At the time I wondered about the authenticity of this representation. But is this not an appropriate way to present place to a Western audience? Gill's is the most famous book on early Mangaian society. It documents many significant events which have taken place here. Gill was a missionary; Tere is a deeply Christian man. Like Gill he too speaks of the coming of Christianity here as 'the coming of light'.

Outside at the entrance to the cave is the spot where the cannibal feasting was held. It is in reference to this that it still bears the significant name of Ruekai, 'Feasting Hollow'.

Tere's narration on the cave from Gill's text conjured images of fierce battles, bleeding and scared people, and the charred remains of those ominous earth ovens in my mind's eye alongside of glimpses of the author of this text. The missionary whose written words are his remains - the stranger to these shores who had the most to say about life and death in Mangaia in the nineteenth century, whose mission was to save lost souls but also to record what he could of what he thought to be a dying culture.

In the remains of the late afternoon sunlight, glowing orange and bouncing in thousands of shattered pieces across the surface of the water, I swam out over the edge of the reef. With my mask clutched to my face I gazed in awe down at the other coral wall plummeting beneath me into the Pacific.

Yesterday I had hovered over the rim of another chasm - one inside the Cave of the Tern. Gazing into the hole I didn't see anything. It's a huge hole in the floor of the cave that spans and blocks the entire passage through - well almost. There is the narrowest of ledges around one side. Tere insisted that we witness his scramble to the other side of the chasm. We stood as close as we could and I shone my torch in front of him into the blackness. The dim light made the white surfaces sparkle on the stalactites.

He wanted to show us that people can get through the cave, and his voice reverberated back to us as he explained this. *Ana* means cave; echoed again - *anaana* - means echo. When he returned to our side of the chasm Tere told us that his twelve year old son climbs over the chasm too. 'He had to learn', he asserted. Gill's book tucked away once we were in the cave Tere spoke more freely about this place.
As is the custom, he explained, he will have a hair cutting ceremony for his son soon. He had decided that he will tie the cut hair to this stalactite which hangs over the chasm.

'This will be the first time that someone has put hair there from a hair cutting', he told us with pride.

This is an investment for us. There is only one hair cutting for a family usually.

Investment in more than one sense. It is a cash generating practice - no doubt about it. The hair is plaited, money tied to each strand by invited guests, and each strand is then cut off by the guests - the family keeps the money – 'thousands of dollars', Tere assured us, 'for a big haircutting'. But it is also an investment in place. Securing his son's hair to this point in this cave fixes his family's position. It ties them to this place.

We made our way out of the cave and into the light. Sitting near the entrance, we paused to take in the view of the valley again and Tere pulled out Gill's book.

'This is my line' he said, pointing to a page.

He has added himself to one of the lineages charted by Gill with reference to the forty-two battles fought on the island.

I am descended from this tribe of people who lived in these caves - the ones who did not accept Christianity first. I have thought about why this is and I think it is that they did not need the power of the missionaries then, they had supreme power.

The sun was low on the horizon as I turned back toward the island from my swim out to the edge of the reef. All was brilliant amber and I found it difficult to make out the borders of land and sea at all. This makes me think about the vantage points from where we make these borders. Sometimes it takes certain journeys to make one realise this. Realisations can happen in uneasy places - of cross-currents and unpredictable ebbs and flows. These moments of reflection enable us to engage in cross-cultural journeys and to tell the stories of our understanding of partial truths.

**OUTER PLACE - LAND/SEA/PEOPLE**

In the narrative above I have drawn attention to a relationship between land, sea and people: land [or island] - *te 'enua*; sea - *te moana* [*te moana nui o kiwa* is a Polynesian reference to the Pacific ocean]; people [of this land/island] - *tangata 'enua*. This particular connection between people and land and sea infuses identity across the Pacific - it is spoken and sung and danced in stories of the past, and lived in experiences of the present. In his epilogue to Robert Borofsky's edited volume *Remembrance of Pacific pasts* (2000), Epeli Hau'ofa writes of landscape and seascape as connected to people but, more than this, as narrating the stories of peoples of the past to peoples of the present.

Our natural landscapes ... are maps of movements, pauses, and more movements. ... Our landscapes and seascapes are thus cultural as well as physical. We cannot read our
histories without knowing how to read our landscapes (and seascapes) (Hau'ofa, 2000: 466).

In this sense Hau'ofa speaks of the potency of land and sea for connecting people across time, or more true to his broader argument here - *around* time, for Hau'ofa writes against the Western linear construct of time which views 'the past' as behind, and 'the future' as ahead in a processual and progressive manner. Might we think about land/seascapes then as connecting places for people throughout time? Consider the poem, *Moana*, by the late writer and anthropologist Kauraka Kauraka, a Cook Islander of Manihikian and Rarotongan heritage. Kauraka evokes potent and complex connections of ocean to people through space and time.

*Moana*

Name of the Great Ocean  
The dark blue sea  
The mysterious  
Moana-Nui-o-Kiva  
Moana-Vai-a-Vare  
Mysterious ocean  
Moana our daughter  
graceful rider through space  
from Havaiki  
today you have earned  
the keys to enter  
the four rooms  
of the mysterious  
ocean of life  
many will call upon  
your name for guidance  
for interpretation  
of these mysteries  
Moana our sister  
you were born and raised  
in the mysterious ocean  
we look upon you for understanding  
of the fish we eat  
the waves that destroy us  
the waves that create new lands  
for us  
Moana our daughter  
Moana our sister  
Moana our mother

Kauraka Kauraka (1987: 17)

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3 Meaning 'myth' or 'mysterious ocean' (Savage, 1962: 162)
Might we consider then these connections not just in a physical sense but perhaps in a knowing sense, and also a feeling sense? Can we imagine landscape and seascape as sentient?

As I have explored in the previous chapter, to understand place is to know that place is bound to people. But we are not set in place, rather, we interact with place. Places are lived as lives are placed. Just as this interconnection, interanimation even (Casey, 1996: 24), is crucial to understanding people and place, it is the relationship between place and space that reveals the potency of each. This tension between informs the discourse of place - of home and away, of theirs and ours, of familiar and strange.

Indeed place is spatio-temporalised - space and time arising from the experience of place itself. To talk about place in this dialogical and fluid sense suggests action, intent, and crucially, movement. As Edward Casey speaks of the power of places, their encouragement of motion in their midst, he argues that places are imbued with life.

A given place may certainly be perduring and consistent, but this does not mean that it is simply something inactive and at rest ... part of the power of place, its very dynamism, is found in its encouragement of motion in its midst... (Casey, 1996: 23).

More than just reflecting a sense of something, places themselves are sentient. It is as though they hold (and know) life - memories, histories, words, thoughts. This holding, or gathering, to use Casey’s terminology, gives places their lasting quality, a pervading quality which allows us to return to the same place, not just the same position or site (1996: 26). This gathering by places is a holding together of things in a place, a holding in of people, and a beckoning to its inhabitants; a keeping of people (as privileged residents) and of thoughts and memories (1996: 25).

So, to conceive of place in this way is to simultaneously consider the fusion of space, time and body, and movements of bodies in, around, and between places, and of the power of place to gather people, thoughts, memories, histories in its midst. Lives are placed in living places.

In the above narrative Tere reveals a place which is marked for him with family significance. This specific place within the cave will witness a moment of transition for this family, and his son in particular, when the tresses of newly cut long hair are hung from the stalactite above the ravine. Here the place might be considered sentient - almost as a person partaking in the same ritual ceremony. Hair cutting ceremonies (pākoti‘anga rauru), initiated by the immediate family of a boy (often the eldest but not always), mark his transition to manhood (although they are often held prior to adolescence in New Zealand, because of pressure to
conform to short hair or for reasons of financial requirement (Loomis, 1990: 202). In an act of reciprocity, each coloured ribbon-tied strand of a boy’s hair, is cut by various invited relatives in exchange for gifts of money. The boy, often seated on a fīvaevae covered chair, is left transformed with short hair and showered with envelopes of money. The relatives leave, having feasted, with a strand of his hair, a reminder of their ongoing concern for his welfare and their connection to the kōpū tangata. Perhaps Tere’s hanging the hair from the stalactite here in the cave carries the memento of the pākoti’anga rauru, (like the relatives at the ceremony). The place is further bound to person, the body joined to the land. Tere’s ‘tour’ of the cave further bears witness to the connection of place to people. His reading of his lineage, in place, identifies himself to us (the tourists) and reiterates this to the land (and his ancestors).

Indeed, Cook Islanders do not speak of people as distinct from landscape or seascape, rather they articulate an understanding of people connected with their sea and land. When identifying oneself one refers to where one comes from. The question ‘No ‘ea mai koe?’ (Where do you come from?) is asked of a newcomer, and the answer ‘E ngāti ... au’ ‘I am from ngāti …’ tells the title holding descent group (named after the ancestor) the person belongs to. Being of a certain ngāti does not give one immediate inheritance to specific pieces of land but gives one the right to approach the kōpū tangata (family) and ask for some land (Baddley, 1978: 151). This being of the land is fundamental to identity throughout Polynesia.

When I first arrived on Rarotonga I was often asked where I was from. Usually I replied ‘New Zealand’ and added that I was living in Australia while I was studying. I explained the purpose of my stay in the Cook Islands for my research and what I was trying to learn, but this was difficult for people who did not have previous experience of foreign researchers, much less much education themselves or exposure to life outside of the Cooks. To leave one’s home and go elsewhere for a purpose was understood by people living on Rarotonga. They have for generations travelled to New Zealand for work and many have made new homes there, but they do this in groups and have established Cook Islands communities there (as discussed in Chapter Two). As my stay in the Cook Islands grew longer I could tell that for some people the whole sense of my being out of my home place was an anomaly.

4 As Terrence Loomis (1984, 1990) indicates, early missionary haircuttings took place to distinguish the heathen from the newly converted. There is debate over whether the practice was introduced by missionaries as a form of control. Still, the haircutting practice is undoubtedly significant as a ritualised performance for marking male adulthood and an assertion of family solidarity and reciprocity.

5 A fīvaevae is a patchwork quilt. These are often additionally embroidered.
'Are you part-Maori, Tina?' Mama, a worker in a cultural tour on Rarotonga, asked me one day. 'No', I laughed. This was hilarious. I think I look the most non-Māori I could imagine someone looking. I have pale, freckly skin, reddish hair and pointed facial features in no way resembling Polynesian people. Why was she asking me this? Later Mama said to me, 'I would hate to be away from my home for that long' - she was referring to me being away from my home - in the Cook Islands and in Australia. ‘Going places that are not your home is interesting’, I replied. ‘Yeah, but you don’t belong there’, she emphasised. From her perspective, she was trying to see just how I was connected to this place. I was not New Zealand Maori, so I didn’t have even a remote connection to land here. I did not have any family here, so why would I want to stay for so long? 

By contrast, land and sea are understood as distinct from people by most foreigners visiting islands. This is not to say that land and sea are not depended upon or their beauty regarded, but that they are seen as a backdrop or scene for human action. Dominant capitalist values place importance on the individual who is perceived as effecting control over their environment. Land and sea are thus understood as surroundings, which in a holiday context become significant for the particular individual’s personal experience of immersing the self into unfamiliar surroundings. The tourists’ environment then becomes highly significant in creating their individual experience of the holiday - in this case the tropical island holiday. But unlike Cook Islanders, their identity is only related to place as an individualistic immersion, in distinction from other tourists, and later in memories ‘back home’ of having been in that place at that time.

Cook Islanders understand that tourists, like most foreigners, delineate people from land/sea. This delineation is translated by tourism industry representations which can either exaggerate the separation of people from place to emphasise solitude or conflate person and place to reflect alluring qualities associated with personal satisfaction.

Aitutaki lagoon tour owner/operator Teina Bishop observed why tourists were attracted to this island:

[It's] the lagoon that pulls them here, like the aerial shot of Aitutaki, the shot of One Foot Island, and all those pictures of the lagoon, but what people enjoy most is people. The fact that we are Cook Islanders, and make people welcome and we can talk to one

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6 Since the 1960s the environmentalist movement has argued against this dominant view, considering that the environment has a primary influence on the development of a person or group, and advocating its protection.

7 Notions of the individual person as a rational, instrumentalist being arose during the Enlightenment. See Michel Foucault’s *The history of sexuality* (1978) for further discussion of the fashioning of the centred individual with bourgeois sensibilities.
another, that’s what they enjoy most. But I think the draw card is Aitutaki itself - it’s a
natural beauty.

Bishop identifies the aspect of the land/seascape which appeals to outsiders from
the visual representations publicised at travel agencies, but then stresses *people* as
what he believes to be the most important aspect of place - most *enjoyed* in situ.\(^8\)
He elaborated on this (later in discussion) asserting that what people visiting
Aitutaki should be offered is a ‘Polynesian’ experience, ‘where they come and
feel part of a home.’

He acknowledged a Western preference for privacy, but was adamant that people
should be included in local peoples’ lives to some degree so as to gain an
understanding of the place they were now in.

I feel that a tourist will get more out of Aitutaki if they come and stay with a family,
but doing their own thing. Like having a hut, an A-frame hut over there, so that they
have their own shower, their own toilet, their own cooking facilities, and at the same
time they’re within reach with the families. They can have a chat at night, the families
can organise to take them out, take them fishing, take them crab hunting, take them to
the island night and explain to them about the show that’s going on - that human
element of tourism. Rather than coming in the hotel and sitting there with your partner
and watching the show - there’s the tourists, there’s the locals [gestures with hands to
show wide space between the two groups], you know. I think that where our quality is
as Cook Islanders is being hospitable, but we’re not showing that to our tourists,
because they are locked up in the bloody hotel unless they go for a ride on the bike.

Papatua Papatua, a prominent cultural expert and tourism authority
representative, also emphasises being with people as fundamental to an
experience of place - especially in the outer islands. ‘Our culture’ in the Cook
Islands - what the tourists want to see - is contrasted with an Hawaiian lack of
culture - ‘nothing more there’.

What I would like, or want to see, is to hold on to what we have now, to preserve that
culture and not to... we are looking at control, yeah control is probably the right word
to use. Because this is one thing that tourists, visitors, want to see - our culture.
Whereas comparatively in Hawai‘i there is nothing more there. But we still have our
culture and we are holding onto it as tight as we can. I think the visitors nowadays are
more interested in knowing what Cook Islands people are and who we are and how we
live and that is one of their main objectives for people coming here to really see the
people, to know them and not only to lie in the sun. Already in ‘Atiu and Mangaia I
have sorted out families that would like to take on and look after visitors that want to
stay in a family, and be part of a family. It is the Europeans [tourists from Europe].
They want to be with a family and eat with a family. That’s what they want.

David, a fifty-three year old Australian doctor, visited ‘Atiu and Aitutaki as well
as Rarotonga on his two week stay in the Cooks with his wife, Jennifer. He told

\(^8\) See discussion in Chapter Five about Cook Islanders’ view that participation is the most
important experience for visitors.
me that the main emphasis of their holiday was to ‘experience the local culture’ and he was also interested in experiencing a sense of history.

The experience of the people is closer and more positive than I had imagined. I was impressed by the strength of the family and the community in maintaining standards of behaviour and there is greater historical depth here than I imagined.

Jennifer, his wife, added that she was particularly interested in discovering the pre-European history of the people and found books and missionary accounts on the outer islands particularly good for this.

Jan shared the interest in people and the past.

The purpose of our trip is to understand more about the lives of the people and to respect their way of life. We have a better understanding of this over the past seven visits - especially by visiting the outer islands of ‘Atiu and Ma’uke.

Sarah, from Britain, visited Aitutaki on her eight day stay in the Cooks expressed her interest in learning things local where she chose her accommodation.

I’d rather stay in guest houses run by locals and socialise with locals to understand people’s lives better but I also learned about the culture and the place from books.

**TIME TRAVELLERS**

Being peripheral to other places and peoples in terms of space and time is not only a geographical and socio-political outcome of marginality in a globalised world, where some places are deemed more central and more significant than others. Peripheralisation is also maintained through nostalgic tales of the exotic perpetuated for the interests and imaginations of those in less peripheral places. ‘Out of the way’ places are also imbued ‘out of time’: with a discontinuity from modern time, or at least a slippage from the pace at which time passes in the world of the travellers. They expect to see ‘how we [or ‘life’, or the ‘world’] once were’ by going to places that ‘time has passed by’.

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9 Journeys of displacement into non-ordinary space and time are taken by tourists, pilgrims and anthropologists (Crick, 1985: 82). Recall Chapter One’s discussion of field construction by anthropologists as a separate place within a measured and distinct time.
Tourism advertisements for the outer islands often project images of ‘out of the way’ places as devoid of people. Natural environmental features dominate representations of scenes reminiscent of past eras, in contrast to the peopled metropolitan regions where the tourists come from. (Image from Tipani Tours brochure, 1998).

The outer islands of the Cooks have long been posited as places of other-timeliness by various travellers. Questions of how the spaces of remote outer islands are rendered as another time require examination of the time/space of travellers themselves. I search for that moment in journeying which is the point of rupture in time and space.

Ethnographic analyses of tourism as disjuncture from mundane time and space have drawn on Van Gennep’s model of rite of passage.\(^\text{10}\) Studies such as those of Nelson Graburn (1977, 1983b, 1989), Eric Cohen (1973 1979a, 1982, 1985,

\(^{10}\) Van Gennep’s model attempted to provide an explanatory framework for understanding the transitions made through ceremonies at significant junctures in social life, such as birth, childhood, social puberty, marriage, pregnancy, fatherhood, advancement to a higher class, occupational specialisation, and death (Van Gennep, 1960: 3) in the lives of ‘tribal’ peoples (whom he termed ‘semi-civilized’). Three phases of separation, liminality and reintegration from the initiate’s social group marked the transitions from one state to another. It is the phase of liminality which has most interested an anthropology of tourism drawing on Van Gennep’s work.
1992) and Dean MacCannell (1976), have drawn on Van Gennep’s theory and on Victor and Edith Turner’s (1978) work on pilgrimage.11

Graburn views tourism as a kind of quest - a sacred journey. Implicit in his notion of tourism as a quest is a shift from the routines of daily life to participation in a ‘talismanic fantasy world’ (Graburn, 1977). In analysing tourism as a form of secular ritual Graburn privileges freedom, freedom from an ordinary sense of time. He claims that touristic time is non-ordinary and hence similar to sacred time in religious settings. Tourism interrupts the flow of profane time. Underlying this assumption is the implication that tourism, in many contemporary societies, fulfils functions once met by sacred rituals.12 Drawing on Leach's (1961) work on the rites of reversal in the period of liminality and Turner’s (1969) analysis of transition rituals, Graburn suggests that tourists go through a process of inversion during their tour. This inversion process occurs at the liminal phase of a touristic rite of passage, at a point when tourists are free to experiment and challenge their understandings of themselves (Graburn, 1983b: 29). For Graburn, tourism, like Huizinga’s (1950) concept of play,13 is a

ritual expression - individual or societal - of deeply held values about health, freedom, nature and self-improvement, a recreational ritual which parallels pilgrimages ... (Graburn, 1983a: 15).

I do not wish to apply concepts such as rite of passage to fit to the holiday practices of tourists visiting the outer islands of the Cooks. There are major problems in transposing the sequence of a mandatory initiation ritual onto an event defined by individual volition, or even personal whim. Neither do I propose to undertake a critique of the use of rite of passage in ethnographic studies of tourism. It is not the model of rite of passage which interests me in my effort to try to understand contemporary tourism in the Cook Islands. Rather it is the work of Graburn and others who focus on tourists being ‘out of time and place’. I am interested in how tourists transpose this state onto the place which they visit.

Tourism shares with play the sense of temporary removal from normative rules. Both are of limited duration and provoke unique social relationships, with feelings of immersion and intensity that Turner (1974, 1977) characterised as

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11 See other significant studies of tourism with consideration to play, ritual and liminality; Wagner (1977), Moore (1980), Lett (1983) and Passariello (1983), as previously referred to in footnote 4, Chapter Four.

12 Graburn draws on Moore and Myerhoff’s (1977) Secular ritual, which demonstrates that ritual does not have to pertain to religion.

13 Huizinga (1950: 13) claimed that play is ‘a free activity ... outside ordinary life ... connected with no material interest ... with its own boundaries of time and space... [which] promotes the formation of social groups'.

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flow. But tourism and play both differ from and reinforce certain aspects of the structure and the values of everyday life. Importantly, tourists are not wholly disconnected from home - home values and ideas pervade experiences away. It is the freedom of feeling beyond usual time and place which allows tourists the privilege to transcend boundaries and play out these novel ideas and identities.

The time taken to travel to the outer islands, or at least to most of the southern group islands, is seldom more than an hour by plane from Rarotonga. But most tourists report a sense of being in a distant place, far from Rarotonga and from other places. In comparison to their activities on Rarotonga (and back home), life on any of these outer islands can seem very different. With a less developed infrastructure, less information is directed at tourists. This lack of development emphasises a sense of detachment from modernity. Thus, to tourists, the outer islands, compared with home places and Rarotonga, appear to be places of the past.

Philip Lucas, a thirty-one year old Australian engineer, travelled to the Cooks on his small yacht with his brother as part of a five year trip around the world.

    I wanted to experience as diverse a range of cultures as possible and to live and experience situations far removed from Australian life. Sailing on a yacht was a real way to achieve this. (Interview, 1.8.98.).

They were near the end of their five-year trip when they reached the Cooks where they spent three weeks on Mitiaro, 'Atiu and Rarotonga. Taking shelter from a storm at sea, the pair anchored at Mitiaro which afforded Philip the ‘best’ cultural experience on his journey. He describes this as a different experience to home and an integration to a new routine.

    My brother and I became one with the locals. Their acceptance of us into their homes and the ease at which we integrated into island life has provided me with the best cultural experience of my whole trip. I met some of the best and friendliest people - it was so good I even call them Mum and Dad and brother. While I've been here I have done everything with my new family and friends. Going to church at 5.30 in the morning on Mitiaro, and living there the same way the locals do is something very different and special to me.

    While I’ve been here [outer islands] I have spear fished, fixed people’s TVs and radios, fed the pigs, baked bread, drank plenty of home brew with the boys on 'Atiu in the kikau house, and feasted something silly.

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15 In Chapter Six I explore further the performative nature of tourists' in their holiday place and time.
Being in this place is associated with another time, in this case Phillip’s idealised simplistic sense of a Pacific Island past, is connected to the daily routine of life there - in the outer islands. The notion that Mitiaro is in an other time is augmented by the belief that he and his brother’s arrival there and especially becoming ‘one with the locals’ are unique and highly personal experiences not shared by many others. Tourists visiting the outer islands strongly distinguish between themselves from other tourists who only visit Rarotonga. They are rather committed to understanding culture, participating with people and seeking out what they perceive as a real Pacific culture. Philip stressed the role of their individualised mode of travel by yacht in enabling them to reach places they considered to be off the tourist track, and to then forge closer relationships to local people. In this instance he described their communion with the people of Mitiaro in terms of easy familiarity, even kinship.

Sociologist Graham Dann (1999) examines the use of time and space in travel writing as a means of distinguishing between travel and tourism, and in valorising travel as a more meaningful way of negotiating foreign peoples and places. His focus on travel writing is both compelling and useful in its wider application to my discussion of the construction of time and space on outer islands.

Although there is a fiercely upheld belief in the distinction between tourism and travel - a division drawn by travellers, travel writers, and travel and tourism researchers - Dann suggests that similarities between the two modes of moving through unfamiliar places are apparent. Travel writing continues to play a pivotal role as a source of information for tourists and a promotional device despite the wide availability of a variety of other media. He concludes that the sentiments of travel (and in particular the use of time and space in travel writing) appeal to the anti-tourist which resides in all tourists (Dann, 1999). On the journey and in the text the traveller/travel writer (and I would add ‘anti-tourist’) asserts spatial supremacy.

The travel writer thus requires a crowd in order to shun it. There is a privileging of solitude, of role distancing in need of an audience (Dann, 1999: 167).

Time too is defined in opposition to the perceived structured use of time back home and to tourists’ hurried and superficial use of time on holiday. Additionally travel writers and travellers must endeavour to get to a place in time - that is before it is ruined by modernity and tourism. Their quest is to ‘discover’ (create) for themselves and their audiences places ‘of the past’ through which to journey ‘in their own time’ (Dann, 1999: 169).

Edward Bruner (1991) too claims that the distinction between tourism and travel is ‘a Western myth of identity’ - that this distinction is more in the minds of tourists and scholars of tourism, than in the ‘reality of the touristic encounter’
(1991: 247). He suggests that this is a distinction drawn by all tourists to absolve themselves from the negative connotations associated with tourism. So-called travellers use the tourist infrastructure.

... the sites visited, the performances witnessed, and the nature of the total experience may be very similar for tourists and for those ‘travelers’ who ostensibly detest tourism (Bruner 1991: 247).

Travel writing which castigates tourism appeals to those who seek an experience which distinguishes them from ‘the masses’ (other tourists) and mass tourist sites, and common tourist experiences. Travellers have to work at making this dissociation from tourists, pursuing a more peripheral situation and articulating the difference to themselves and others.

Van den Abbeele (1980) and Van den Berghe and Keyes (1984) argue that travellers’ aversion for tourists can be understood through MacCannell’s (1976) interpretation of tourists’ quest for authenticity. Van den Abbeele (1980: 7) considers that tourist’s quest for authenticity is individualistic. He therefore surmises that a competition for authenticity leads some tourists to refuse the identity ‘tourists’ and to view other tourists as capable of rendering an experience inauthentic by their presence. Van den Berghe and Keyes (1984: 346) arrive at a similar conclusion, but further suggest that inflation, overcrowding, and shortages of accommodation caused by tourism inflame resentment between tourists. For ‘ethnic tourists’, Van den Berghe and Keyes suggest, the animosity is even deeper as tourism ‘destroys the very thing he [sic] has comes to see: the unspoiled native’ (1984: 346).

The concept of authenticity in the anthropology and sociology of tourism literature has centred on a debate between Dean MacCannell and Eric Cohen. MacCannell (1976) conceives of modern society as constructed on a denial of tradition, but paradoxically generating the creation of ‘modern traditions’. He considers tourism to be one of the most powerful modern traditions. Its attractions are peak cultural experiences, in which meaning is created through consumption, rather than the productive processes central to previous eras. MacCannell argues for a deeper, more complex analysis of the cultural significance of tourism. For him tourists are the ‘pilgrims of the modern age’ (1976: 43). Their ‘quest’ for authenticity, he claims, is a modern functional substitute for religion.

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16 Burkart and Medlik (1974) and Smith (1977) have made a distinction between travellers motivated by ‘sunlust’ - the emphasis placed on holidaymakers for sun, sea, sex and sports - and those motivated by ‘wanderlust’ - a preference given to the journey itself. Riley (1988: 320-321) implies that the behaviour of budget travellers tends toward the ‘wanderlust’ description of travel motivation, visiting ‘tourist’ sites but seeking ‘non-tourist’ experiences.
Cohen (1972, 1979a, 1979b) refuses to consider tourists in a standardised and typical manner as ‘moderns’ seeking authenticity. Moreover, he argues tourists do not behave as total aliens to a new and foreign environment - experiencing all anew - but enter the new context in a ‘bubble’ of their own taken for granted world. There is a difference in the degree of strangeness versus familiarity, a continuum which, he claims, forms the ‘basic underlying variable for the sociological analysis of the phenomenon of modern tourism’ (1972: 167). Cohen’s work cautions against an understanding of tourists which postulates that ‘all tourists are modern pilgrims despite what they say or feel’, and argues for an approach which rather considers how social conditions generate different modes of tourism (Cohen, 1979b: 23).

So, while Cohen disputes a unified concept of ‘tourist’ he also disputes the usefulness of the notion of authenticity as having given and objective qualities. Specifically, he refutes MacCannell’s underlying assumption that social analysts and tourists necessarily share a sense of ‘authenticity’ attributed to the non-modern. The problem with this overarching view of authenticity, according to Cohen (1988b), is that it renders all involved in tourism powerless puppets of a grandiose deception. According to this perspective on authenticity, commoditization changes the meaning of cultural products and of human relations, making them eventually meaningless. Once this happens the authenticity of local cultural products and human relations is destroyed and a ‘staged authenticity’ emerges (MacCannell, 1973). This in turn thwarts the genuine desire of tourists for authentic experiences which furthers the process of commoditisation and inauthenticity.

MacCannell’s interpretation is not only homogenising it is rather prescriptive. A now common critique of MacCannell’s perspective on authenticity is that it assumes an overly passive role for tourists and people working with tourists. McIntosh and Prentice’s (1999) research with British tourists in theme parks considers how tourists aid in the production of their own experiences of authenticity. They emphasise emotional and experiential interpretation.

Bruner (1996) compares authenticity to the term ‘ethnicity’ - as something which needs to be thought of as ‘sought, fought over and reinvented’. He (1989, 1996) suggests that tourism has less to do with what other people are really like and more to do with how we imagine them to be. Thus tourism discourse is more like any other form of representation, including ethnography and art. Rather than wondering if objects and experiences are really authentic, Cohen (1995: 21)

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17 Cohen (1988b) refers here to research such as Greenwood’s (1977) study of the impact of tourism on the Basque Alarde ritual which concluded that once an aspect of a culture is commoditised the meaning is lost.
suggests we could ask what endows these touristic experiences with authenticity, in their own view.

Authenticity, Cohen (1988b) argues, is negotiable and socially constructed. Moreover it is not enshrined in the past but undergoes constant change. Like tradition, it emerges from dialogue in the present moment about the past and the future. Indeed, as John Urry emphasises, the transforming of historical sites into attractive spectacles should not be considered inauthentic for there is no authentic reconstruction of history as ‘all [reconstructions] involve various kinds of accommodation and reinterpretation’ (1990: 155-156).

In their effort to avoid the perceived contrivance of tourism, some tourists seek outer places. A movement off the beaten track must occur, into a seemingly more authentic space of communion with the indigenous peoples of the place effected in part by the solitude of the traveller and the isolation from other ‘tourists’. Dann (1999: 165) writes,

the gaze of the imperial eye forms an essential part of the travel writer’s trek into the interior.

Following Mary Louise Pratt (1992), he suggests that this ‘visual conquest’ is more than a physical displacement of tourist by author/traveller, but a rejection of tourism’s ‘seaside’ in favour of travel’s appropriation of native living space.

Ian Munt’s (1994) research on postmodern tourism and class, suggests that tourists engage in an effort to distinguish themselves from each other (in a class struggle that characterises capitalist society) through the consumption of commodities - objects and experiences, and specifically in this case - holidays. Tourism involves accruing personal cultural capital as a means of self-distinction and self-definition. This encompasses the pursuit of ‘superior’ forms of tourism referred to as ‘travel’, off-the-beaten-track experiences, more ‘culturally’ and/or ‘ecologically sound’ versions of tourism, reading the ‘correct’ literature (such as travel guides like the *Lonely planet* or *Rough guide*), and seeking ‘better’ experiences - more extreme, more personal, more rare. These tourists seek to

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18 Margaret Jolly (1992) makes a similar argument about tradition in a Pacific context, arguing that church hymns, the mass and Bislama should be viewed as tradition alongside ‘pagan songs and indigenous languages’. She rejects a dehistoricised and exoticised view of Pacific cultures which rests on the premise of tradition in a fixed and ‘true’ sense.

19 See Keesing and Tonkinson, (1982); Linnekin, (1990); Linnekin and Poyer, (1990); Jolly and Thomas, (1992) for debates concerning the politics of tradition.

20 See Chapter One for a comparison of this privileged traveller role with the anthropologist/fieldworker.

21 Watson and Kopachevsky (1994: 657) also take this perspective of tourism as subject to the dictates of commodity exchange and consumption patterns.
emphasise *themselves* as ‘authentic’ travellers through their ‘authentic’ experiences.

I see authenticity, or the interest in attaining it, as occurring in tourists’ identification of the *self* as well as the *other* (MacCannell’s founding interpretation of authenticity is too one-sided to accommodate this). Indeed, this quest for the authentic other in relation to the authentic self is a meta-narrative which speaks of a tension informing all tourism (Selwyn, 1996). This pervades discourse about the familiar and the unfamiliar, the West and the Rest, the exotic and the mundane. As anthropologist, Tom Selwyn, writes,

> The character of this other derives from belonging to an imagined world which is variously pre-modern, pre-commoditized or part of a benign whole recaptured in the mind of a tourist ... in successful tourist destinations the natives are always friendly (Selwyn, 1996: 19).

Hazel Tucker finds that tourists spend much of their time in the village talking to other tourists and authenticating to each other (in a competitive way) the experiences they have had (1997: 115). Many tourists perceive Göreme people as ‘living in the past’, in some kind of purer life, free from burdens of modernity (1997: 119). In an effort to prove a superior authenticity of experience from other tourists, some will try to seek out ‘real’ encounters with ‘real’ people of the village, and try to photograph these ‘real’ villagers, preferably not posing so as to preserve the natural and timeless image of these people of the past, and to render the tourist the possessor of an authentic experience.

Authentic experience is gained in various ways. Alongside of an interest in the past and ideas about traditional life in the Cooks, many tourists visiting the outer islands also emphasised experiences of authenticity through their involvement in the seemingly mundane events of daily life. Many stated that these experiences were more accessible in the outer islands.

Philip Lucas was quick to distinguish his experience from that of other tourists to the Cook Islands who travel by other means, do not spend the amount of time in one place, or do not get as involved with the lives of local people as he did. He states,

> I like doing my own thing or going in a small group so you see as much as possible. Big organised groups move too slowly and are not usually sympathetic to native peoples’ way of life. [These tourists] usually see only the lobbies of hotels but rarely ever see the inside of a local’s house or meet his family.

Roger Malcolm, Mayor of ‘Atiu, is originally from New Zealand; his wife, Kura, is ‘Atiuan. They own and operate the original, and for many years only, tourist
accommodation on the island, the ‘Atiu Motel. Roger and Kura have housed all the tourists who have come to the island for the past twenty years. Roger understands who the tourists are and what they come to ‘Atiu for.

Well, the market [for the Cook Islands] has changed. It was mainly an American and New Zealander to begin with, now it has switched to European. Italians and Germans make up a huge proportion. The types of people that are coming have changed. Once you become an established route, the explorer type doesn’t come. It’s the ones that come because so and so came and thought it was a great holiday they had - they are the followers rather than the explorer type.

[And] we get the curious [ones]. They don’t find out much about this place, they just know you can go there. Maybe they’ll see it in a travel book but they won’t find any brochures on it, they won’t find many people that have ever been there before, so it sounds like a good place to go. Those are the people who want to go where no one else has been before. They are usually professional. They are active, generally they are active people. They are not after canned entertainment. They really want to have sort of unique experiences.

The ones we have difficulty with are the geriatrics, the people who are no longer physically able to get about themselves. That’s hard. Then you have to do a lot more work and make much more personal attention. We don’t like getting those. There’s nothing worse than having someone stuck in the bungalow, because they can’t get out and about. If you can’t ride a motorcycle … [you can’t cope with] this island really. You need to be able to ride a bicycle or a motorbike (Interview, 6.10.98.).

Jan and Ron are a middle-aged couple from Newcastle, Australia, who have visited the Cook Islands for holidays seven times over the past ten years. I spoke to them several times on their holiday to the Cooks in September 1998. On ‘Atiu we met at the Fibre Arts Studio, run by German expatriate Andrea Eimke. Our conversation turned to the outer islands and more specifically the kind of things they do during their time in the Cooks. Ron stressed,

We are not tourists. We are not your usual type of person who comes here. We get around and see things other tourists don’t … we go into the community halls and watch the dance practices.

Implicit in these statements is the ability to seek out the ‘real’ in the people and the place visited, to partake of everyday life, and to thereby have a more authentic experience. Like some other visitors who make repeat visits to the outer islands, and unlike tourists who come only once for their own recreational reasons, Ron and Jan make contributions in return for the hospitality they are shown on their visits. This time they had brought medical supplies with them for ‘Atiu’s small clinic.

22 Just prior to our visit a second accommodation place opened, a guest house run by a resident German-born couple Andrea Eimke and Jurgen Manske-Eimke.
On the outer islands tourists are less likely to encounter other tourists, they are more visible to the local community, and more reliant on the relationships they form. Indeed, communicating with members of the local community who are not necessarily employed by the tourism industry, is imperative to find out where to obtain food, how to get from place to place, where one might fish, safely swim, visit church, go out on the lagoon.

These images convey 'Atiu as an 'outer' island where solitude, history, a pure and accessible environment and local conviviality may be experienced. ('Atiu Motel brochure, 1998).
The outer islands are often photographed from above, rendering the entire island visible. Represented thus in tourism brochures their isolation from the wider world, each other and Rarotonga is emphasised. (From Tipani Tours brochure, 1998).

It is less their actual spatial distance from Rarotonga, or the time taken to travel to them that places them in this non-ordinary space/time far from Rarotonga and metropolitan homes of visiting tourists. Rather it is a constructed spatial and temporal distance together with an *association* (by Islanders and the tourism industry) with *past* cultural practices, values and quotidian sociality that emphasises for tourists the *outer* authenticity of these places. Going to a distant place imbued with qualities of distant time, visiting outer islands such as ‘Atiu, Mangaia, Aitutaki, is translated into a ‘discovery’ agenda. Disjuncture of time is enacted alongside disjuncture of space. The authentic island place is experienced as apart in space and time.

**Freezing tropical time on fantasy islands**

How has the landscape and seascape of these islands and people’s place in it been represented to tourists visiting the Cooks, in tourist brochures? Many brochures quote views of other distinguished travellers to assert a true vision of the beauty of the island. A brochure for the German *T. S. Hamburg’s* 1973 Christmas/New Year ‘South Seas Cruise’ which called at Rarotonga, rhapsodised about a
‘handsome’ singing and dancing people and a ‘breathtaking’ ‘lush’ and ‘rugged’ backdrop. This condensation of people and place in a ‘perfect island’ is verified by reference to other notable European visitors - populist writer James Michener, and *Bounty* mutineer, Fletcher Christian.

In his *Tales of the South Pacific*, James Michener found this the most perfect of all islands. And you’ll have time to see so much of it - the open air temple - Marae Arai te Tonga, a relic of pagan Rarotonga, the citrus trees, traditionally first seeded by Fletcher Christian, the spellbinding singing and dancing of the handsome natives, the rugged hills, lush colourful vegetation and breathtaking vistas (New Zealand Department of Island Territories. 1973. File no. 90/11/19).

The stasis of the scene is accentuated in the promise that a marae from ‘pagan’ times and citrus trees seeded from the eighteenth century can be seen now. The fantasy is projected that tourists will see a pagan or an eighteenth century island - as it was then. It is as if the island is preserved as a relic for the tourist gaze.

But this vision of frozen life - people dancing relentlessly against the backdrop of environment and history, is not confined to luxury liners from Europe. An inbound tour operator *Tipani Tours* appealing to a mainly New Zealand audience in the 1980s presented the outer islands in their brochure as the ‘as always’ isles. For the person seeking something different, a trip to the outer islands offers an insight into the real Pacific. The traditional Polynesian culture and custom [is] still very much the everyday way of life on these untouched islands (*Tipani Tours* brochure, 1998).

It featured Aitutaki, headed as an ‘interlude’ for those travellers who ‘wish to relax off the beaten track’, and listed the islands of the southern group - ‘Atiu and Mangaia as ‘the pineapple islands’. The message conveyed was that these outer islands require an effort to reach but are special because of their ‘untouched’ state. Again, the authentic Pacific/Polynesia is located in the outer region.

Exotic but not *too* exotic. Representations of the Cook Islands - especially the outer islands - in tourism industry discourse, convey a sense of people and landscape unchanged in ways which might appeal to those seeking an assurance of tropical hospitality. But by contrast a local Cook Islands’ tourism publication asserts that the outer islands are quaintly static in a colonial way - discovered and converted, they are now Christianised and Anglicised. It assumes a comfort for intrepid travellers embarking on their voyages to the outer islands in learning that there is still a piece of colonial England in the tropics. *Tūrou*, the Cook Islands visitors’ weekly newspaper, (6-19 August 1982, p.8.) provided information for tourists about where to stay on the island of ‘Atiu alongside an article about Captain Cook’s ‘discovery’ of ‘Atiu, Manuae and Mangaia. The latter suggests

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23 Like many of the agricultural crops in the Southern group Cook Islands pineapples proved economically non-viable to export to the New Zealand market.
that these outer islands are important not just for historical reasons, but for the list of notable VIPs to the Pacific who either passed through or stayed to effect change on the islands. ‘Atiu and Mangaia, states the article, are proud to be associated with Cook. Bligh found Aitutaki; Fletcher Christian, after the mutiny, called into Rarotonga; and London missionary Rev. John Williams and the Tahitian pastor Papehia are responsible for the life enjoyed today by bringing the Gospel to these islands. Evidence of Christianisation and civilisation in these ‘out of the way’ islands is perhaps curious and comforting to potential tourists. Visitors are told that Mangaians refer to their island as ‘Little England’ and have an ‘official’ Queen Victoria Post Box at the post office.

**Authenticate the fantasy - ‘doing’ time on the island**

Nancy Keller, author of the *Lonely planet*, is passionate in her opinion that the outer islands were places that did not receive enough tourists. She stated:

> I don’t know what else I could do, I even say right in my introduction that a lot of travellers never get past Rarotonga and Aitutaki, and that’s a shame because the outer islands are wonderful. But what I want to say is ‘look you must go to visit the islands’.

(Interview, 18.8.98.)

Describing the landscapes of ‘Atiu and Mangaia as difficult to access by a general tourist public, she sees a solution in making them more physically accessible, and thereby readable for outsiders.

> What if they had a really wonderful network of walking tracks where you could get out there and see whatever - across the streams or mountains? A little trail going across the makatea - in some of the islands it is sharp and it will cut you. It is not easy to walk across it - it is nerve-racking. A lot of times there is no shade so you are hot, and you are about to cut yourself any minute on the makatea - it is not a pleasant experience for anyone. It is definitely interesting, but it is not easy. So for example, senior citizens coming, some are real spry but some are not, or people with little kids it’s hard for them to really do that. Just a wooden footpath that goes across swamps and all places where you can’t normally go - it enables you to go and see it. That could be developed. [It would be] so much better and there could be pamphlets or something to tell you what this plant is or how did this [get there], there are so many things that if you see it and you don’t know anything about it, you just pass it right on by.

Their landscapes must be made navigable.

The tourists who visit the outer islands emphasise the pristine quality of landscape and seascape in contrast to Rarotonga and to their homes. They speak of the perceived rarity of the landscape features on some of the outer islands, small indigenous and tourist populations, and even the lack of promotional material about the outer islands (compared with Rarotonga). In their experience they have discovered a less contaminated and implicitly more exotic and authentic Pacific Island.
Islands have long been associated in Western European thinking with solitude; Pacific Islands perhaps even more so for their perceived remoteness. Remoteness from each other and from the centres from which visitors come. With the remoteness and marginality of islands comes a simplicity of lifestyle uncluttered by commodities, sought after by the sole traveller visiting the outer islands who desires to take on the characteristics of nature in the self. This might be getting away from a home environment which requires obligations, or to a differently understood ‘pace of life’.

Experiences of holidaying on outer islands are expressed by what’s not there. The lack of commercialism and services, the people without worries and stress, the land without pollution, add to the charm for some. Those who struggle with holidaying on the outer islands complain of the lack of services such as daily banking, credit card facilities, groceries, restaurants, running water, hot water, public transport and entertainment, and efficiency.

New Zealander, Paul, a marketing executive in his thirties who has lived in France for many years, talked about his weeklong stay in the Cooks with his wife. He reflected on the ‘exceptional quality of the land and sea scapes’. His most memorable experiences were in Aitutaki.

... snorkelling in the lagoon surrounded by fish, and walking in total darkness on the road back to the motel in Aitutaki - and the crabs on the road... and landing on the runway at Aitutaki with puddles of water and stones... and being completely alone on a beach all afternoon... (Interview, 31.7.98.).

In emphasising his surroundings, Paul recalls his embodiment in it. Being surrounded by fish, being in total darkness, being completely alone.

Tom, a fifty-two year old Scottish audiologist, also named an outer islands experience as special for him. Like Paul, he mentioned Aitutaki’s environment, and in particular the guide from whom he learnt about it.

Tau’ono was a very gentle and interesting person who knows about the reef and lagoon and his island and he’s willing to share that with others. He can only take two people at a time on his outrigger canoe trip, so you can have a conversation with him. He is also very safety conscious and explains clearly what he wants you to do. (Interview, 26.8.98.).

Tau’ono is recalled as a guardian of his island and a conduit for others’ experience of Aitutaki’s land and sea scape.
Under an ‘off the beaten track’ heading ‘Atiu\textsuperscript{24} features on the Lonely planet’s Cook Islands web site entry.

Atiu may be the best kept secret in the Cooks, with beautiful scenery, excellent beaches and few other visitors. The island itself is a geological curiosity; surrounded by a ring of raised fossilised coral … the island resembles a very low-brimmed hat with a flat outer rim (www.lonelyplanet.com/destinations/pacific/cook_islands, 2002).

Features of this ‘curious’ landscape and what can be done at them are outlined briefly on the website for viewers. The \textit{makatea} from which to \textit{explore} the caves, the beaches on which to \textit{stroll} and \textit{sun} oneself, sinkholes in which to \textit{snorkel}, a steep road on which to \textit{pass through} plantations, taro fields, pawpaw trees, \textit{makatea}, forest and \textit{marae}, the villages through which to make a \textit{circuit}. The list culminates in consumption - \textit{tīvaevae} quilts which can be \textit{custom ordered} or \textit{bought}, and coffee to \textit{watch} being hulled, roasted and packed, then \textit{sampled} and \textit{bought}.

Australian tourists, Jan and Ron had ideas for how ‘Atiu could better represent itself to tourists (like them) who wanted to learn about the island - specifically the environment and the people. Jan suggested,

> What they need here is someone to teach about an \textit{umu}. They’ve got all the food. It’s something people like us would love to do. Do you know they use basil in the cooking here? They could do it [\textit{umu} demonstration] when people ask about it.

Ron suggested signposts for some of the sights, such as Cook’s landing, and some of the caves and \textit{marae}. The idea is one that has been discussed before. Some on the island feel that it would be counter to a ‘natural’ image for the island to have things signposted, others argue that someone would have to keep the dust off and clear the plants away from obscuring the signs. There is little local interest in the idea. But that which is partially obscured presents an opportunity for discovery by tourists to the outer islands.

There are no signs for the \textit{tumu nū}. Its mystique for tourists is retained by its out-of-the-way-ness. ‘Atiu is the only island in the Cooks which retains this ritualised drinking ceremony - the \textit{tumu nū}\textsuperscript{25} or bush beer school. Those describing it to outsiders often liken it to a Melanesian kava ceremony - kava replaced by strongly alcoholic home-brewed beer. Beer, originally brewed from oranges was

\textsuperscript{24} ‘Atiu had a population of approximately one thousand people when we visited in 1998. As is typical of most of the outer islands many people between the ages of twenty-five to fifty are absent - working overseas or on Rarotonga.

\textsuperscript{25} Tumu nū literally means trunk of the coconut tree. Tumu refers to the source or foundation. Nū is a general term for palm tree, or specifically coconut tree. It also refers to the drinking stage of a coconut.
originally drunk by groups of men out of the eyes of judgement in the villages, in huts in the bush. But what was once hidden is now revealed to outside eyes.

A *tumu nū* on ‘Atiu is presented in the ‘Atiu Motel’s brochure as a cultural event in which tourists may partake. The absence of outsiders in the photo enhances the perceived authenticity of this practice for potential tourists to the outer islands. (From ‘Atiu Motel’s brochure, 1998).

As I have mentioned, and this will be discussed in the final chapter, tourists’ involvement in what is understood to be a *local* ritual, is a point of verification of authenticity. Attending a *tumu nū* is understood in this way by tourists visiting ‘Atiu. That is - they are experiencing the *real* Cook Islands.

In the evenings the locals have the *tumu nu* where everybody gathers to drink bush beer, sing and dance. The beer, previously banished by missionaries, was consumed in hideouts surrounded by bushes; thus the term bush beer became popularised. The *tumu nu* tradition is now integral to the social fabric of the island. Try it. It’s potent! (*Cook Islands Sun* souvenir guide 1998, 10 (2)).

The *tumu nū* is exclusively a men’s event, although occasionally women tourists are permitted to attend. The two features of the *tumu nū* appealing to most tourists are its *history* and the opportunity to *participate* in it. It is authentic to ‘Atiu, and to their idea of a history and tradition soaked, Pacific Island. One tourist writing in the *Cook Islands Sun* visitors’ souvenir guide describes his experience of this.

Experiencing the *Tumu nu* or bush beer school was a highlight, not just of my visit to ‘Atiu but of the many trips made to the Cook Islands ... to ‘Atiuans it is a social institution, akin to popping down to one’s local for a few pints and solving the world’s problems ... on that ubiquitous island transport, the motor scooter, bumping across fields and narrow dirt lanes, we finally arrived at a small *kikau* shelter tucked away in the foliage (1998, 10 (1)).
It might be now somewhat of a tourist spectacle and encouraged as an opportunity for tourists to participate with local people, but the small numbers of tourists visiting ‘Atiu (only a few hundred a year) do not yet pose a threat to its viability. Roger Malcolm is conscious of the pressure tourism could place on the *tumu nū*. He has thought about the numbers of tourists the island could sustain without negative impacts.

The guys who go to a *tumu nū* don’t want tourists there every night, they wouldn’t like it and they very quickly would say to themselves ‘oh, I don’t want to go where there’s tourists. I want to go and talk to my own mates’, and they’d go somewhere else. So there’s a pressure on the *tumu nū* and I sort of figured that one night out of two is a reasonable loading, you know. Also they don’t like it when there are more tourists than there are them, so you got more figures, and it turned out that forty beds was the limit on the island - for the *tumu nū*, otherwise that resource would collapse (Interview, 6.10.98).

**CONCLUSION**

Authenticity should not be taken as a given. It is both fluid and negotiable. Notions of ‘true’ nature and culture, solitude, and a conflation of the past with distant space all coalesce to denote an **other** time - a past of ‘real’ indigeneity (the exotic other). These become signs for an authenticity of place and experience. For tourists visiting outer islands authenticity encompasses a need to find out about an imagined other - Selwyn’s (1996) ‘myth of the authentic other’. This involves an other sense of time - the past, and an other sense of place, remote islands where land and seascapes are experienced as all-encompassing and lacking the influences of modernity. People of these islands are viewed by tourists as being more authentic for their closeness to their islands and potential proximity to tourists. Authenticity is extended to what Cohen (1995: 21) has termed an ‘emerging postmodern ethos’ which sees tourists as being less concerned with authenticity in the sense of the origins of an attraction or its cultural genuineness as long as the visit is an enjoyable one - an ‘authentic good time’. An authentic good time for many tourists visiting the outer islands involves treating the island holiday destination as a dislocation from a home context - especially in the sense of breaking with routines of spending time. They engage in what Selwyn (1996) has termed ‘myths of the authentic self’ through distinguishing themselves from other less authentic tourists who do not visit outer islands, do not attain their level of appreciation for the environment and culture, and do not make connections with the local people or learn about the past of the place - do not do the real time in the real places of the Cooks.

Authenticity, from the perspectives of tourists visiting the outer islands, appears to be constructed in articulation with other tourists, local people and tourism publications. Yet, authenticity cannot be thought of as being completely an aspect
of tourists or a feature of those who engage with tourists. Attention to performance reveals that it is simultaneously in and between both.
Chapter Six

PERFORMING IDENTITY: CONSTITUTING EACH OTHER AND OURSELVES

Transformation and transcendence are especially marked in cultural performances, in what Victor Turner has called putting experience into circulation, for it is in performance that a society is most articulate and powerful in giving expression to its key cultural symbols, paradigms and narratives (Bruner, 1993: 321).

Storytelling is a means of asserting identity in tourism contexts as anywhere. This chapter considers two narrated events - Constitution Day parade and a cultural tour to reveal how narrative is embodied as performance and how storytelling constitutes identities. Through focusing on the constitution of national and cultural selves through stories I want to show how tourists become incorporated into the storytelling effort and so become part of an effort to articulate identity at various levels, simultaneously.

Stories are the means through which relationships are created and played out between tourists and local people: stories told in brochures, by travel agents, by other tourists, by travel literature, by various popular media, by locals and by diasporic Islanders. These two ensuing narratives - performance pieces - represent and retell events involving dialogues on Rarotonga in 1998. They tell implicitly and explicitly of us and them, here and there, now and then. Importantly, performances replicate but in this replication is creativity and change.

Victor Turner’s (1957, 1974, 1982, 1986) work on social drama, influenced by Max Gluckman’s (1940) multi-faceted performance event analysis,¹ is foundational to my consideration of performance as processual. In social drama, which he defined as ‘an objectively isolable sequence of social interactions of a conflictive, competitive or agonistic type’ (1986: 33).

Turner reflected Gluckman’s view of society as fragmentary but also comprising continuity that he articulated as ‘social process’. Turner positioned his work and

¹ Max Gluckman’s (1940) analysis of a day in the life of workers building a bridge in Zululand can be understood as a cornerstone for studies of cultural performance. A radically anti-functionalist approach for the time, Gluckman’s work represented the event of the bridge building in terms of an illuminating paradox. Out of a mixture of workers and supervisors, black and white, workers at one time, and ritual performers the next, came a clarity of constant principles - of race, of occupational specialisation, of work and beliefs (Parkin, 1996: xvi-xvii).
understanding of performance on the edge of a new paradigm that critiqued a modernist synchronic view of society.

With the postmodern dislodgment of spatialized thinking and ideal models of cognitive and social structures from their position of exegetical preeminence, there is occurring a major move towards the study of processes, not as exemplifying compliance with or deviation from normative models both emic and etic, but as performances (Turner, 1986: 80).

Performances, he asserted, are located (and generated) 'out of the dialectical oppositions of processes and of levels of process' (Turner, 1986: 80). David Parkin suggests that continuity 'lies precisely in people's performative attempts to bridge differences between one event and another' (1996: xviii).

It is this relationship between events that I find pertinent in my own performance analysis. I will return to this later in discussion. Suffice to say at this stage that performances might also attempt to bridge differences not only between events, but between persons, times, and places.

Feminist theorist Judith Butler has used her understanding of performance and performativity to disrupt hegemonic conceptions of sex, gender and sexuality (1990, 1993). She uses a linguistic definition of performativity she states it as

That aspect of discourse that has the capacity to produce what it names. This production always happens through a repetition and recitation (Butler in Osborne and Segal, 1994: 33).

It is precisely because the productivity of discourse is iterative that there are possibilities for slippage and disruption (Butler, 1990: 25). Discourse to Butler is multiple, contradictory but always productive. The power of discourse lies in its specific produced effects (Gregson and Rose, 2000: 434).

Drawing primarily on a processual notion of performance creation, but also on Butler's sense of performativity as citational practices, I consider dialectical oppositions of persons, place and time (us/them; here/there; now/then) as a means of revealing identities through performances, and subverting or asserting power.

Performances are provocative.

Anthropologist Christopher Tilley (1997: 84) has described cultural performances as 'dialogic encounters and exercises in reflexivity'. He states

These [cultural performances] are ways of negotiating an external relationship with outsiders through projects which represent a sense (or senses) of identity. Constructing a spectacle for others involves the development of a product that is self-censored. It has the capacity to exclude elements which are unacceptable to themselves as part of contemporary modernity. As such it embraces a seemingly contradictory capacity to evoke a past and constitute an imagined future (Tilley, 1997: 84).
I want to emphasise a sense of provoking past, present and future notions of identity and of articulating here in relation to there. Relations of time and place are not separated out from exchanges between people. They are of course always bound up with notions of us and them - of ‘you, over there, then and/or now’ and ‘us, over here, now and/or then’ but also of ‘you, here, now and/or then’ and ‘us, there, then and/or now’.

**CONSTITUTING EACH OTHER AND OURSELVES - PARADING THE NATION**

Since 1966, the year after Cook Islands self-government, celebrations of this political status have developed into several days of festivities on and surrounding August 4th, Constitution Day. The annual celebrations include official speeches and the lighting of the Constitution flame, an inter-island dance competition, inter-island and village sports competitions, and a float parade down the main street of Rarotonga’s capital, Avarua. In 1998 the Ministry of Cultural Development, attempting to both indigenise and de-politicise the event (which has historically been associated with Sir Geoffrey Henry’s Cook Islands Party) re-named the celebrations *Te Marē Maeva Nui* (loosely translated as ‘great triumphant event’). ‘Kia kā to rama, ei toki tarai ‘enua’ - ‘light your torch, sharpen your adze and carve a better nation’ was the theme for this year’s celebration. Nation-building motifs which hark back to cultural roots are not new in these celebrations (Sissons, 1999). Indeed, the annual Cook Islands Constitution celebrations have become a focal point for a demonstration of nationhood and the *culture* of the nation - a performance of what it means to be Cook Islander.

While the country gears up for this annual moment of reinscribing a collective self-identity, the non-Cook Islanders on Rarotonga at this time are drawn into observing the Constitution celebration in action. An event narrating people in place, it is experienced if not directly as a tourism spectacle then very proximate to it. What right-minded tourist or anthropologist would miss a show of this kind? This year tickets were sold to all the events at $5 from Tourism Cook Islands and the Ministry of Cultural Development (Te Tauranga Vananga).

It’s Friday 31st July 1998 I stand on the main road of Rarotonga’s capital, Avarua alongside a thousand or so other spectators, (approximately ¼ of the crowd locals and ¼ *Papa ā*) awaiting the opening ceremony and the Pacific Corned Beef float parade. Most of us are crowded at the round-about at the end of the main row of shops by the seven-trunked coconut tree. Kids run into the road and adults peer over heads to see back down the kilometre or so stretch of road toward the Punanga Nui, the road side market place from where the parade will begin.
A large white tent, backed toward the sea, houses the dignitaries: the traditional leaders Pa Ariki (the leading chief of the House of Ariki2), Tinomana Ariki, Dorice Reid (mata’iapo and leader of the Koutu Nui - the court of traditional leaders), the Queen’s Representative Sir Apinera Short (one of the original members of the first parliament in the newly self-governing nation) and his wife Lady Maui Short, Papatua Papatua (the chair of the organising committee for the Maire Maeva Nui), the leader of the Cook Islands Religious Advisory Council and other church leaders; and the political elite: the Prime Minister and his wife Lady Henry, the members of cabinet and parliament, the heads of the ministries, and the University of the South Pacific campus in Rarotonga.

From the tent entrance facing the round-about, and looking beyond the government offices, businesses, and to the mountains and hinterland of the island in the distance, Sir Geoffrey Henry, the Prime Minister, opens the celebrations. This year is the first held without complete government financial support. The Prime Minister appeals to the people to carve a better nation. This appeal will be echoed and elaborated further by him later in the day in the national auditorium.

The concept of self-government is a way of life intrinsic to our culture...[this has been] lost under colonial [rule]...[we have been] relying on government to do this and government to do that...[but] one example [of our self-reliance] is this independent event. [It is] non-political and self-funding ...[run] by community representatives - Papatua Papatua and all in the private sector. The theme of this year’s Te Maire Maeva Nui is propelled out of the library of our past. It is an in-your-face challenge to each and every one of us...

The theme speaks to every school and every health worker, sporting organisation and sports person. It speaks to all those who plant and fish and feed livestock, to all with a job and to those without. Keep your torch lit, may yours be a nation shaping adze. What a powerful saying from our ancestors and a timely exhortation. They are sending us a legacy...

Where is your torch? Is it lit, or is it dead? Is it lit so that all in the house can benefit from it? We need a torch for the present and the future - like the word of God - 'a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path' - our path to future economic and social development, prosperity and happiness, self-reliance, dignity and national pride. As for the adze in your hand - how sharp is it? How will you wield it? For points on your political score board? For a misguided ego trip? Generations will look back to this day and say they heard the reo³ of our ancestors.

Torches and adzes; seeing and carving - the Prime Minister wields the thematic props with aplomb. Today’s ‘torches’ and ‘adzes’ are marched in with the Boys Brigade - the Cook Islands national flag, the flag of the Cook Islands Games (Tarekareka Kuki Airani) and the flame for the Maere Maeva Nui/Tarekareka Kuki Airani festivities. Battling with their props in the wind,

2 The House of Ariki is a house of hereditary chiefs with traditional standing but no longer political power. See Chapter Two for a more detailed description.

3 In this context reo refers to ‘voice’. It is also glossed as ‘language’ (Buse with Taringa, 1996).
amidst impatient groans from the crowd, the boys eventually succeed in raising the flags and lighting the torch.

Now groups of school children, church parishes, hospital volunteers, the Red Cross, workers from the local soft drink company, the movie theatre, the contestants in the Miss Cook Islands competition, a pop band of teenaged girls, and village sports teams make their way down the road - all adorned with flowers, all waving to their friends and relatives in the crowd.

We are the building blocks for our nation
We are the leaders of the next generation

The Tereora College float is bedecked in these bold red and blue slogans proclaiming a place in the future for today’s youth. On the back of a kīkau covered blue pick-up truck students dressed as young professionals in the trimmings of their chosen professions stand behind a giant two sided flag - on one side the Union Jack and on the other a circle of fifteen stars on a blue background, the emblem of the fifteen islands of the nation.

(Kristina Jamieson, 1998).
A huge bottle, maybe eight foot tall, like a cartoon with its brazen yellow colouring and oversized label, hangs suspended from another pick-up truck adorned with foliage. The bottle swings round wildly and, like a cannon, fires at the crowd showering us with liquid in celebration of Rarotonga’s locally made fizzy soft drink, Vaiora.

Now the pièce de résistance, the Empire Cinema’s majestic Titanic ocean liner literally floats down the road towards us. Although perhaps the only entry which is actually smaller than the object it seeks to represent, the grandeur of this ‘larger than the average truck’-sized boat is not doubted for a minute by the gasping spectators. Its passengers - an assortment of elegantly adorned ‘English’ aristocrats sip champagne and smoke from cigarette holders, as they stand upon the deck. Tina Vogel, star dancer and contestant in the up and coming Miss Cook Islands competition, in a flowing white gown sits to the fore of the deck, waving regally.

This float is clearly the favourite with the crowd. Gliding its way down the main street the liner surfs the same wave of popularity that the Hollywood blockbuster movie has enjoyed on the island. It had been standing room only for many of us on the opening night of the Titanic at the Empire theatre just a couple of weeks ago. The tragic story of two young lovers on the world’s most famous ill-fated vessel caught the imagination of Rarotonga’s youth. I recalled a discussion I had witnessed a few days ago. A young woman half-jokingly asked her brother-in-law if he would go back for family members if he was on the sinking boat, or save himself.

Ota Joseph from the Ministry of Cultural Development announces each float as it reaches the round-about at the end of the road and coasts past the tent of dignitaries.

Here comes the ‘Are Mango! Ota cries out.
Mention of the ‘Are Mango, a sacred place, a famous ancient marae - in English ‘the house of the shark’ - where skills were taught to warriors and priests on the island of Aitutaki many generations ago, makes me wonder what this float could be representing - perhaps a new take on an old story?

Ota laughs into the microphone;

Here comes the great white shark.

The crowd rumbles and a dishevelled group of Europeans in their twenties, clad in not much more than beach clothes wrapped in leaves stride into view. A woman, wearing leaves and a sun-dress sits upon a ‘throne’ carried by four bare-chested men dressed each in shorts, pārea cloth and jeans, with leaves around their waists.

The ‘Are Mango guest house, not the ‘Are Mango marae, is responsible for this inaugural entry in the parade - a backpackers’ construction of Cook Islands pageantry and ceremony.

The group walks toward the tent and begins to address the dignitaries.

We are representatives from five different nations.

One of the men offers the Prime Minister a hatchet and a torch as the crowd starts to laugh.

‘Ura, ‘Ura!

Ota shouts at them.

Come on, dance, dance, dance!

Enticing the ‘representatives from the five nations’ to do more than look the part, Ota makes the beat of a drum on his thigh. The woman is helped down off the throne and self-consciously she and some of the men start to shuffle about to Ota’s beat.

We laugh and clap.

More, more, more!

This bumbling take on Cook Islandness by a bunch of scantily clad backpackers clashed dramatically with the vision of Cook Islands-ness the locals themselves presented. Surely the backpackers’ effort was an affront to the nation’s image? But local people watching the parade seemed not to be offended by the backpackers’ rendition of Cook Islands-ness. How might the acceptance, and even celebration of these seemingly contradictory performances of national (and entrepreneurial) pride and tourist frivolity be interpreted?

I want to suggest that such a performance - any performance - is more than just what is seen at a particular moment, in a particular place. Indeed, performance has the power to seemingly spontaneously summon up other times and places,
and peoples. I will shortly look closely at what this might mean for the performances I have just narrated. But let me do so by way of discussing performance itself, and its use as an analytical concept.

**Who's performing who?**

Greg Dening addresses the communication between us and them as *theatricality* - in this instance he refers to the theatricality of history-making (1996: 105). In a theatrical sense the us and them are actors and audience. Performance allows both actors and audience to enter into a shared space. This is a space of viewing, closed around by convention - a space in which both actors and audience commit to a ‘conspiracy of their own illusions’ (Dening, 1996: 105). Paradoxically, this ‘conspiracy’ or awareness of the shared illusion, Dening’s ‘performance consciousness’, does not obscure a sense of truth. It seems rather, that the performance itself is all the more potent for this shared consciousness.

Performance illusions are not illusory in the sense of being ‘plucked out of thin air’ sense. They can be creations of truths. Speaking about cross-cultural performance to a group of anthropologists and historians at a writing workshop at the Australian National University, historian Dipesh Chakrabarty (2000) stressed how the pretence in performance emphasises the creativity and embodiment in being ‘cross-cultural’. The illusory aspect frees performance, giving space not for a replication of *what is* but rather a rehearsal of *what might be*.

In the context of this Constitution Day parade, what might be assumed about theatricality and performance consciousness? Who are the audience and the performers -- the us and the them? It might be assumed that the audience and the performers (the us and the them) in this performance of nationhood would be citizens in relation to each other - the performers and dignitaries in relation to the spectators. But in this Cook Islands Constitution Day parade, tourists are also present in the audience watching the parade go by, and more significantly they have also entered the parade.

I earlier suggested that the relationship between ‘hosts’ and ‘guests’ is much more fluid than that proclaimed by some anthropologists who assume a pre-existing fixity and obscure the emergent and performative. How might we further understand how performance plays with notions of us and them to reinstate cultural and national identity?

Contrary to a clear cut differentiation between us and them, as ‘hosts’ (servers) and ‘guests’ (recipients), at times visitors to the Cook Islands, and the outer islands of the Cooks in particular, are *not* clearly differentiated as tourists but are
referred to as *Papa‘ā* and/or as *manu‘iri*. There is more implied than simply ‘serving’ and ‘receiving’. Use of either of these terms suggests that there are connections being made outside of a purely contemporary tourism context. Acceptance of the backpacker float in the parade and insistence on an impromptu dance performance suggests a conflation of tourist with *manu‘iri* in this performance.

*Aro‘a* is not a show of submission to outsider interests as has been intimated by some travel writers presenting a view of Pacific Islanders as simple and friendly. *Aro‘a* was extended to these performing backpackers as an active challenging gesture. Experiencing the *culture* was in many ways what the backpackers did but perhaps not as they realised it. For in making *them* dance the ‘hosts’ were incorporating them into the very fabric of the relations which guide sociality in Polynesia. They were transforming them from outsiders into insiders; through welcoming them and by asking them to dance they were relating to them as *manu‘iri*.

Ota Joseph (MC of the Constitution Day parade) explains the distinction;

> I never use[d] [those] words when I was the MC - tourists - I use [the word] *visitors*, because when you translate that in our language we call it the *manu‘iri*. I never use tourists, ‘cause tourist to us is, well the way I see it, tourist is not really a family of ours. When you [are] called tourists it seems to be somebody from round there who comes round here but when I say *manu‘iri*, it is part of me. They come here as mine to see me. I’m not going to call you tourist, I’m going to call you *visitors*. Visitors is a friend that comes from somewhere in the world here, and that’s the way I see it - that’s the way we do that (Interview, 3.9.98.).

*Manu‘iri* denotes a ‘guest’ in an inclusive indigenous sense and not the generic sense of ‘guest’ used by the tourism/hospitality industry denoting an anonymous visitor such as a hotel client. An understanding of tourists in a commoditised sense - as vectors of profit for the nation - is certainly articulated by Cook Islanders but alongside of this local sense of how to deal with these outsiders - in this case, as we have seen, to make them if just for a moment *insiders*.

The ‘us’ and the ‘them’ in this momentary performance by the backpackers flips between audience and performers. That is, the directors of the performance encounter for a moment the perceived audience as performers. These tourists are performing others - Cook Islanders of old - but simultaneously performing selves - recreational backpackers. The MC in making them dance enters into the playful

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4 *Manu‘iri* is defined as ‘guest from distant parts, stranger. Originally someone living in a tribe as a guest’ (Buse with Taringa, 1996: 223).

5 See Chapter Three’s consideration of travel writers Theroux and Llewellyn.
nature of performance by augmenting their statement - 'look at us'. However, he makes them not the performing ancients they had imagined - pā'ata-carrying ceremonial figures - he reminds them both of their tourist identity and duty as manu 'iri. Participation requires them to dance, and as in other venues where tourists are asked to dance, the statement is one of assertion of local prowess and elegance, and tourist ineptitude. This is not meant in any malicious way, it is the fun of the performance, but nonetheless it is an assertion of the rightful place of performers and audience in this context.6

On Cook Islands dance, Kalissa Alexeyeff states 'it is not only possible, but very funny to dance what cannot be said' (2000: 306). Alexeyeff, in an article about 'drag' in Cook Islands dance shows - or more specifically to use her phrase the 'cross-dancing' contexts in which men perform women's dances - refers to the 'comic currency' of performance (2000: 298). The fascination and comic appeal of these dances lies, she suggests, in their embodiment of 'subversive potential' and reiteration of the normative (2000: 396). The men performing as women dance in more provocative ways than is appropriate for women to dance - they call attention to ideals of femininity, but they are also parodying men in dancing a feminised masculinity (like laelae - loosely glossed as men who act like women).

Terrence Loomis also points to the potency of dance to perform what might not be spoken. In discussing the cultural performances of Cook Islands tere parties in New Zealand, Loomis states that such contexts can overturn 'bourgeois papa'a norms of propriety' creating an alternative world of meanings in which outsiders are at a disadvantage (1990: 205).

[Papa'a] efforts [to dance] are invariably greeted with ironic cheers and laughter from the largely Cook Island audience, because of the sheer incongruity of the scene: Papa'a 'manu'iri' trying to dance the Cook Islands way. Indeed, the pretend world of the cultural performance permits gentle poking fun at those who, in the world outside the dramatization, are often in a position of authority (1990: 205).

6 See William Mitchell (1992), Caroline Sinavaiana (1992) and Vilsoni Hereniko (1992, 1994) on clowning in the Pacific. Hereniko's (1994) overview of clowning in Polynesian societies suggests that although the contexts for ritual clowning have been eroded through Christianity and colonialism contemporary means persist for restoration of humour, emphasising the needs of the oppressed and a 'more humane approach to power and prestige' (1994: 21).
Backpackers perform in the Papa‘a Dancer of the Year competition at the Banana Court, Avarua - a popular event with tourists and locals. Long-stay Papa‘a usually win. (Kristina Jamieson, 1998).

**Parading times and places**

The constitution celebration in Rarotonga is a performance in dialogue with audience and performers, an engaged and shifting dialogue in which audience and performers can and do exchange positions, but also and importantly, it is a performance of time and place, in time and place. This requires imagination of the where and when of the moment in relation to other wheres and whens. An imagination of identity. A reflexivity, as Christopher Tilley (1997) would also assert.

Barbara Myerhoff writes,

... cultural performances are reflective in the sense of showing ourselves to ourselves. They are also capable of being reflexive, (my emphasis) arousing consciousness of ourselves as we see ourselves (1980: 7).

What Myerhoff points to here, and Victor Turner is also at pains to reveal, is that performance can go beyond reflection or expression of a way of being in the world ('social system' or 'cultural configuration' to use Turner’s turn of phrase). Performance can critique the social life it arises from - it can evaluate, celebrate or reject the ways society handles history (Turner, 1986: 22).

Anthropologist Simone Abram’s (1997) work on tourism in the Auvergne region of central France questions the representation of histories to tourists. In asking what happens when tourists come to see or ‘experience’ the past of a place, she was forced to consider pasts through regarding performance in complex and changeable contexts. She reflects ‘the audience is not just ‘there’, waiting to be entertained but is also constructed by the performers’ (1997: 43). Abram suggests that tourist audiences initiate the framing of performances, which provide a background against which to reflect on local identity (1997: 46).
Here can be Pacific Islands, Rarotonga, Avarua, the beach (Greg Dening’s cross-cultural metaphor). There can be metropolitan nation-states, New Zealand, Australia, but also the outer islands, the northern group islands, the villages. Now can be Friday 31st July 1998, this moment of (post) modernity in the twilight of the twentieth century, this time of development, of entrepreneurialism, of globalisation, this time of revival of ourselves. Then can be 4th August 1966, other independent times - before colonialism, times during colonialism - not that long ago, times ahead - of youthful energy, or youthful exodus?

The tourists involved in this performance also have their own notions of identity in relation to time and place. Recall in Chapter Four the romantic notion of time assumed by wedding tourists who, following tourism discourse, construct and experience an alternative time out for themselves on their individualised ‘paradise island’. In the Constitution Day parade the tourists might be seen by some as a disruption to this performance of time/place/person - the identity of Cook Islanders - but I insist that their presence is part of the performance itself; an addition to the dialogue of who Cook Islanders are now, in relation to others over time.

As I stated earlier in Chapter Four, I agree with anthropologist Nelson Graburn’s (1977, 1983b, 1995) work on tourists at play (and that of Cohen (1985), Gottlieb (1982), Lett (1983), Moore (1980), Riley (1988), and Wagner (1977)) who suggest that tourists experiment with their identity on tour. The enactment of other personae reinforces values associated with the style of touring undertaken. Although there is much debate about the emphasis placed on the recreational aspect of tourism, there is agreement that certain tourists do engage in tourism for recreation more than others and that ‘backpacking’ tourists in particular seek an assertion of free and independent status through engaging in such activities.

Of the fifty thousand tourists per annum to the Cook Islands approximately 20 percent stay in budget type accommodation (backpackers’ and guest houses), 50 percent in hotel resorts, 20 percent in self-catering accommodation, and the remaining 10 percent in luxury villas or private accommodation (Tourism Cook Islands, 1997). Over the past five years the backpacker segment of the tourism market has increased due to the destination being considered a relatively cheap and appealing stopover for young Europeans, Canadians and Americans en route either back north or to Australia and New Zealand. They now form a substantial presence of youthful and adventurous tourists on Rarotonga at any given time throughout the year.

I interviewed the young European men and women who performed in this parade after the event (8.8.98.). Caught up in the usual sociality of being backpackers they were sitting together in the evening drinking beer after a day’s snorkelling.
Brad, from the United States, had suggested that they enter the float parade for Constitution Day. They had all been out to an Island Night the previous evening where they’d eaten a meal of taro and chicken, watched a dance show, had a few drinks, and been asked by the performers up to dance. Brad suggested they do a traditional Cook Islands thing for the Constitution Day parade - they’d been to the Island Night, they knew how to look the part.

Sara from Canada explained the preparation for the event to me.

We sat here the night before and plucked the leaves off the palm tree.

Palm trees?

She looked puzzled and turned to Maria the hostel owner’s daughter for verification.

Yeah.

But the effort to play at being Cook Islanders of old suddenly became more serious on the day as they were drawn in by a responsive crowd. Sara reflected;

I just thought we’d be wandering by waving at everybody and having a bit of a laugh, it all got a bit official. I was surprised to see that there was a massive crowd and I didn’t realise that it was quite as official as that. We didn’t know that the Prime Minister would be there and the Queen’s Representative and all that - we didn’t actually know that they were who we were talking to when we did our presentation.

We were a little bit worried just as we were about to start that maybe we would offend people but it was actually fine, people were laughing away. While we were actually sitting around waiting for the Prime Minister’s speech some people came up and said it’s nice to see a bunch of tourists participating in something like this.

That night we went out and many other tourists from all over the world said it was fun and they liked it and it was a good idea - and also locals. They took it with humour. I think they enjoyed it.

This is a nice souvenir.

It is not surprising that these backpacker tourists acted in this way. Backpackers in general make a considerable effort to distinguish themselves from other types of tourists with claims to be accessing the real culture and experiencing more than other tourists do (Cohen, 1979a, 1988b; Jamieson, 1996; Riley, 1988). Backpacking tourists ('travellers' as some would prefer to be known) are usually in a twenty to thirty year age group but it is this experiential mode of travelling which often distinguishes them from other tourists, and which they use to distinguish themselves from other tourists. The distinction between tourist and

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7 See Chapter Five’s discussion of the distinction made between travellers and tourists.
backpacker (or traveller) is not based on age but the associated experience one has while travelling, as John, a fifty-three year old American man reflected

I like doing things and figuring out things myself... organised tours are primarily set up for tourists rather than backpackers (Interview, 3.6.98.).

Two of the participants in the parade had been staying at the backpackers’ hostel for several months - they were doing part of their dentistry elective on Rarotonga and so classed themselves as ‘different from other tourists’. One of the other young men, on his way back to England from New Zealand stated his difference from other tourists in terms of what he had seen.

I’ve been to a village in the mountains in Fiji for a couple of days and what I saw of Fiji was different from a lot of other people... you know I stayed on - I wanted to see a South Pacific Island and experience the culture (Interview, 8.8.98.).

In the eyes of these tourists they were acting outside of the realm of what usual tourists would do by taking part in something they considered a local occasion. Their experience made them distinct from other outsiders. So for them it was efficacious to emphasise the effort they were going to to be here, that is, in an other place - as opposed to drawing attention to their being outsiders. For the Cook Islanders who watched their performance - and cajoled them into dancing - they were clearly outsiders but while here they needed to be treated in some way as appropriate to here. As I have suggested above they were made temporary Cook Islands manu’iri through dancing.

The reference to times gone by - in the traditional dress and carrying of the pā’ata - was another aspect for experimentation and inquiry in the performance. Time in performance is not understood as a linear continuum in spatial terms, but always in dialogue with person and place. The juxtaposition of tradition with modernity - this effort at outsider enactment of ceremonial tropes amidst the flurry of national modernity celebrations - required and received a response asserting a continuity of identity by the Cook Islanders in the audience. I suggest that the resulting demands on these performers to dance is evidence of what Victor Turner refers to as social process. That is, the micro-performance here - the appearance of the backpackers dressed as traditional Cook Islanders, their address to the dignitaries, and their invitation to dance, and acceptance of this - arose from a social process of etiquette and protocol for negotiation with outsiders in this local context.

This performative attention to other times and places (or ‘citational practices’ to use a Butlerian term) in relation to the now and here of this parade day is also exemplified in the captivation of the audience’s and performers’ imagination by the Titanic float. The Titanic movie, and symbolically now Rarotonga’s Empire theatre’s boat too, told a story steeped in colonialism - a story of privileged decks
and escapes for elite passengers, and circumscribed space and no escape from it for the underclasses; of the relative weights of new money and old wealth; of leaving home for new opportunities in new lands, and the perils which lie within such opportunities. Or, perhaps the Titanic in Rarotonga could be simply read as a drama of the might of the sea. Sea dramas are never far from home on an island. Neither are the flotsam and jetsam of waves of colonialism.

This national performance embraces modernity through an assertion of tradition held in common - 'who we were' is still, in our hearts, 'who we are'. But while self-government and torch lighting, adze sharpening, nation-carving were the words on official lips this day, colonialism's waves continue to pound the reefs. Performing the nation on Constitution Day is about bringing the nation to town. Some villagers, and outer islanders, do not come to Avarua - either they cannot afford the trip or they choose not to be part of what some see as Rarotonga's celebrations. Aitutaki in 1998 held their own float day parade, and did not enter a dance team in the national competitions. For dwindling populations on some of these islands it is difficult to celebrate a way forward when much of their youth are leaving for brighter (foreign) shores.

So, in terms of time with regard to this performance a provocative question raised might be: whose time? The future vision for outer islanders is one often obscured by the dominant views of Rarotonga. Proclamations of youth leadership, small business success, and even spontaneous intrusions by tourists (a hint that this industry is very much present and economically successful) are not outer islanders' forecasts for times ahead - they are Rarotonga's. While the rhetoric is seemingly inclusive - nation, us, Cook Islanders together - the reality is always more complex. National pride seems open to all but is national fortune? In this performance time and place both inscribe a superficial inclusivity - the notion of a body of islands to be experienced and embodied as one. But performance of time and place on this day also suggest differentiation: the nation brought into being as a colonial project, and disparate islands experiencing 'growth' and 'success' or 'backwardness' as a result of their uneven proximity to the rewards of a globalised economy.  

I refer here to the varying abilities of some of the islands in the group to benefit economically. Rarotonga, and to a lesser extent Aitutaki, profit from the development of a tourism industry. Manihiki and Penrhyn (Tongareva) in the northern group of the Cooks are two of the outer islands benefiting from a black pearl export industry. The plight of most of the other outer islands with regard to economic development remains bleak.

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The isolated village culture, the hallmark of a traditional anthropology in search of native simplicities, has become, like everywhere else in the world, a kind of borderland. A highly ambiguous ‘contact zone’ (Clifford, 1997[a]), of competing, changing and emerging identities is created wherever ethnicity and tradition is placed on display and becomes the focus of attention (Tilley, 1997: 74).

Unhindered by clouds, the sun blazes on the village of Arorangi from above the mighty peak of Rae Maru. Rere, Naomi, Maru, Emma and I sit hunched on wooden crates in the shade on the concrete floor of the Village, the Cook Islands Cultural Village - a village within a village.9 We weave extra plates for the midday meal and bang yesterday’s plates on the concrete floor to shake out the black bugs that are hiding in the folds of the coconut leaves.

A smell of cooking meat wafts on the morning air. But it’ll be a few hours yet before the chicken is served up for the ‘guests’. The frozen portions boil in huge pots on the gas stove-top.

Naomi opens a packet of Twisties and offers me some.

Tangi walks toward the kitchen dragging a sack of ‘akari behind him. He holds three sprouting coconuts - uto - in his other hand. Uto, the spongy inner part of a young germinating coconut, is a delicious delicacy to people here. Wasted on the palette of a Papa’ā, it’ll be eaten in the kitchen as we arrange the plates for the tourists at today’s show.

‘Papa’ā!’

There’s a cry from the kitchen. Mama, chopping the itchy taro leaves, waves her knife behind us. A man, camera aimed at the mountain backdrop, has wandered back behind reception. He clicks the shutter at Rae Maru then turns his gaze on us.

‘Take him round the front’, Mama mutters gruffly.

This spectacle is not for him.

I stand and approach the German tourist asking him to follow me to the front of the building - the show is about to begin.

Kia orāna and welcome to the Cook Islands Cultural Village.

9 The Cook Islands Cultural Village cultural tour was established by the late Sadaraka Sadaraka in Arorangi in 1988. It continues to be owned and operated by the Sadaraka family. It is one of the few specialised tours of its kind in the South Pacific region and is unique in its representation of Cook Islands culture. The Polynesian Cultural Center on O’ahu, Hawai‘i, which has been running since 1963, has been somewhat of an inspiration for the CICV (personal communication with Lois Sadaraka). Max Stanton’s chapter in both editions of Hosts and guests (1977 and 1989) discusses the economic and social impacts of the Polynesian Cultural Center. Terry Webb’s article offers a consideration of the PCC as tourist art (1994).
He takes his rightful seat alongside the others in a small room decorated with artefacts and a map of the islands of the Pacific. His peek into life here will happen as he and the group of tourists, thirty today, wind their way between old style huts housing life in portions - history, clothing, fishing, medicine, weaving, coconuts, cooking, music, and finally, feasting and dance in the 'are karioi - the house of entertainment.

It’s hot and the shade of the huts brings welcome relief to the mainly middle-aged tourists. Sun-screened and sweating, some are waving their brochures at their faces. At the coconut hut James asks the tourists how they have opened coconuts.

With a screwdriver, an axe?

You see, there are three holes? This is the coconut’s face - two eyes and a mouth. If I don’t get two halves, don’t blame me, I’m from one of the outer islands.

They laugh. He strikes the coconut between the eyes with a small rock and confirms his identity as Rarotongan as the coconut splits in two.

To grate the coconut our ancestors used pearl shells but they break easily so I made my own one from ‘Cook Islands stainless steel’ made from a truck spring. It will last me a very long time.

James has demonstrated coconut husking, splitting and grating and blowing the pū or conch shell. A couple of men and then a couple of women have got up in front of the group to try to emulate James’ pū call and generated laughter from the group rather than much in the way of sound from the shell.

James blows the pū. The tourists watch and photograph prior to some of them having a try. (Kristina Jamieson, 1998).

Now Rere arrives with a basket of husked drinking coconuts - one dollar each. Red and white striped straws inserted into the ‘mouth’ of the coconuts complete the ready-to-go products.
I come back into the kitchen to chop the *taro* leaves for the *rūkau*.

What are you doing? Mama asks.

Chopping the *taro* leaves - shall I do this?

Yeah - but chop them fine, really fine.

I get the plank of wood from under the sink, that serves as the chopping board and begin to slice the leaves having rolled them into a ball, tucked in the end underneath the bundle and push it down onto the chopping board as I slice, like she showed me the first time I did this. The knife is sharp and I am careful, taking my time so as not to cut my fingers and to make sure that I cut it fine enough.

Tourists jostle between hut presentations to photograph Emma and Naomi in their costumes. (Kristina Jamieson, 1998).

Two hours along and the group encounter a strong smell of cooking food in the air - they are almost back at the group of huts from where the tour started. Sipping their coconuts they meander on to a hut where they take their seats on wooden benches either side of a circle of neatly placed rocks and sticks on the sand-covered earth floor. Lara, daughter of the village owner, is talking about the food that is cooked in an *umu* - an underground oven - *taro*, sweet potato, breadfruit, pawpaw, chicken, pork, seafood. As she talks, she holds up each of the raw vegetables and fruits. Some of the tourists have not seen these foods before today, although some raise their hands to Lara’s question about attendance at the Island Nights (island-style dancing and feasting) put on by the larger hotels on the island.

Lara points to the oven on the floor and motions for Tangi, standing in the background, to come forward and show how fire was made. He kneels and picks up two sticks - one of which has deep, darkened grooves. Pushing downward in short fast strokes he rubs one stick along the other. Puffing, he stops, addressing the onlookers. ‘Anyone got a light?’ They chuckle at his appeal for the intervention of modernity as he continues his ancient task. A thin stream of smoke rises to applause.

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*Rūkau* is made from the leaves of the *taro* plant, chopped and boiled with coconut milk.
In the kitchen the chicken has been taken off the stove. Mama drains away the fatty water, and lifting out a piece of plastic packaging, passes the steaming pieces to Maru. She and I paint them with soy sauce and chicken stock and return them to the oven to bake. Banana leaf-lined plates are adorned with samples of island food - grey-purple slices of the staple starch vegetable *taro*, *rūkau*, a pile of freshly grated coconut, half a banana, a slice of pawpaw. *Taro* balls are prepared for those who have ticked the vegetarian option on their forms. Cooked *taro* is pounded and rolled into balls and heated coconut cream poured over them. Glasses of orange iced cordial are filled on trays. A pile of white paper serviettes weighted under a rock on the kitchen bench flap in the hot breeze.

Maire places coconut on the food baskets for the tourists’ lunches.11 (Kristina Jamieson, 1998).

The dancing has begun in the ‘are karioi. The men are assembled on the dance floor and are being asked by Tangi and James to show their bravery by demonstrating how they would kill a cockroach. A sunburned middle-aged English man twists his foot as he finishes off the offending creature and gains the approval of his audience. The men slap their chests and forearms, and leap around courageously to James and Tangi’s recantations of a Pukapukan warrior chant and then the women in the audience are asked to come up to learn to ‘ura with Rere. James jokingly likens the spinning of their hips to a washing machine. Rere shows the embarrassed-looking tourists to sway more than spin and then releases them all back to their tables for the meal.

The guests tuck into the feast with their ‘traditional knives and forks’ - chicken fat runs down elbows and fingers are licked and wiped on serviettes. They

11 Although they are taken on different days, these photos depict quotidian events at the Village.
watch a selection of dances by their hosts - the tour guides who took them through the various huts and prepared their meal.

Now it is time for our ‘ura piani, where we ask partners up to dance, Mama announces.

Are there any honeymooners here?

A hesitant hand is raised.

What’s your name?

Sarah.

And yours?

Michael.

And where are you from?

England.

Sarah is to dance with James, Michael to dance with Mama. James, Mama and the other hosts now turn back to the audience and ask other partners up to dance. There is a mixed response of reluctance and enthusiasm among the other chosen dance partners from the audience. Elaborate cameras are on necks and arthritic knees are pointed at as reasons for not partaking, but eventually about two-thirds of today’s tour group are finally standing out on the dance floor. The drummers begin - first with a slow beat and then the fast beat. Money belts jingle, reef sandals swivel as the guests endeavour to demonstrate with some degree of grace what they have learned of the art of their hosts earlier performance.

Naomi dances with a German tourist in the ‘ura piani. (Kristina Jamieson, 1998).
As the drum beat ceases and the hosts thank the guests, who hasten to their seats. The German man, the one who filmed Rae Maru earlier, resumes his gaze behind the lens of the camera, standing to capture the tour guides posing together to the side of the dance floor in the sun for a final shot. Then they leave.

Plates of half eaten meals lie strewn across the wooden tables. Most of the chicken is eaten but the two piece serving has been too much for some, the pawpaw was a success; and some of the tāro and rūkau, and coconut and banana. Taro balls are not in favour with today’s crowd. The grey balls sit in pools of coconut sauce on the banana leaves.

We gather the plates, sweep the floors, and wash the pots in the kitchen. James and Lara gather the tourists into the bus and embark on the sequel for some of the tourists - the circle island tour.

**Lick your fingers, swing your hips: ‘ura and umukai as embodied performance**

Recall my earlier assertions about performance. Performances derive from, indeed they are embedded in, the everyday fabric of social life - they are the stuff of ongoing concerns of who we are in relation to you, here and now. Yet simultaneously they engage with representations of both previous and future times and different places and persons. This reflexivity affords performance a privileged position for commentary about ourselves - an embodiment of identity.

The first section of this chapter has discussed performance in relation to an event for the marking of national and cultural identity. I have suggested that rather than an exclusive vision of what it means to be Cook Islanders - a national Constitution Day float parade for and by Cook Islanders - a rather more fluid performance occurred in which a tourist entry in the parade became an impromptu part of this very effort to assert identity. Dialectical oppositions between us and them, here and there, and now and then enhance the force of this performance reinstating an identity in relation to these other persons, times and places. But this generation of identity is not a smooth and untroubled process. With regard to the relationship of Cook Islanders to outsiders - specifically in this instance European backpackers - a reinforcement of attributes of ‘Cook Islands­ness’ is achieved through the ability of onlookers to entice the performers to participate through dance. This is a practised pattern for dealing with outsiders, but its success does depend on the willingness of the other party to perform. Further, I suggest that this assertion of national identity performed throughout the parade is one that is ultimately cogent for urban Rarotonga, but not wholly inclusive of the more remote islands in the nation.

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12 Although I refer here to national identity, later in the chapter I will explain how national and cultural identity have become conflated in the wider nation-making project in this Cook Islands context. This observation is made by anthropologist Jeff Sissons (1997, 1999).
I want to examine now how this second narrated performance relates to embodied assertions of identity. Specifically I will discuss this in relation to two significant components utilised by Cook Islanders, and Polynesians in general, in performance and of course as part of sociality itself - dance and food. Both have become key ingredients for tours within the Cook Islands - perhaps in some ways this might be seen as an essentialising effort, but maybe more generously as an interface of performativity between tourism and quotidian sociality, or even tourism as quotidian sociality.

Kalpana Ram notes that the power of performance [she is discussing dance] is in its capacity to ‘elaborate, draw on and interpret’ the following dimensions of experience: relationality, coherence, intersubjectivity, embodiment, temporality and a certain ‘givenness’ to the world (2000: 363). She suggests that a sense of ‘truth’ is sought in its capacity to invoke these dimensions of experience. In this sense dance is indeed a means through which dialogues are entered into by multiple and changing audiences about complex notions of identity and certainly too, as Ram suggests, authenticity. In the Cook Islands, dance is a means of performing and embodying personhood as Kalissa Alexeyeff (2000) suggests, but it has also become a means of embodying national/cultural identity. Jeff Sissons asserts,

The most widely shared of the ‘traditional’ expressions of post-colonial national identity in the South Pacific is dance … its national significance has, over the last thirty years or so, become increasingly a reflection of its transnational commodification and marketing (Sissons, 1999: 43).

Dancing is indeed an integral part of most performances in a Cook Islands setting - performances for selves and for others.13 Coinciding with the inauguration of the nation in the 1960s, dance became a vehicle for, and expression of, the youth, dynamism and unity of this body of geographically disparate islands. Members of the government-run Cook Islands National Arts Theatre (CINAT), formed in 1969, became performing ambassadors for the Cook Islands - travelling to Australia and New Zealand - and at home they became a symbol of national pride for their performances overseas. Indeed, throughout the 1960s and 1970s dance troupes played this dual performance role of putting the Cooks as a nation and a people on the international map, and bearing witness to this status on their return to Rarotonga. Jeff Sissons comments on the massive kaikai held for the members of the CINAT on their return:

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13 Similarly, anthropologist Michel Picard finds that while dance in the Balinese context constitutes a theatrical event appreciated by tourists, it is also ...the venue in which Balinese society stages itself for the Balinese, where its history is interpreted and its values affirmed - the crucible in which its members celebrate their belonging to the same community (1996: 134).
[These feasts were] occasions for official and public expressions of national pride; they were also opportunities for boasting at the expense of the Cook Island’s competitors in the tourist market (1999: 53).

On these overseas excursions CINAT also participated in events of national significance for other nations, such as the opening of the Sydney Opera House in 1973. This afforded a chance to be seen by an international audience as a nation alongside other nations.

At a personal level, for the members of the dance troupes who travelled overseas to perform during this time, this was an opportunity for travel, and for social interaction afforded them by their culture. Mamia Savage, a renowned dancer with CINAT and the dance troupe *Te Ivi Māorí* in the 1970s and 1980s recalls,

... when I go back and think about that team [Te Ivi Māorí] it’s really the opportunities there that came my way and travelling overseas for promotion the team took me as far as England and Europe - France, Italy, it’s really ... just through dance and culture and everything (Interview, 11.11.98.).

Danny Mataroa, also a former dancer, and now MC for the Island Nights at two of the large Rarotongan hotels, Club Raro and the Edgewater, states,

... when I joined the team ... all these dance teams I’ve been in ... we were just keen. It’s the comradeship, it’s the involvement in our culture and there’s the adrenalin that’s in you before you get on stage, you know. It’s the performances; it’s the fun. It’s the enjoyment and the closeness together (Interview, 12.12.98.).

With the opening of hotels during the 1970s dance performances for tourists on holiday in Rarotonga began. Mamia Savage recalls the ‘Are Tipani bar where the forerunners of the hotel Island Nights were held in the 1960s. A string band would play and members of the youth clubs from the villages would ‘come in and strum your ukulele ... and dance’ [sic]. This was more of a local hangout, Mamia remembered, but the occasional tourists visiting Rarotonga at this time would also come along. Just a few years later the hotels were regularly holding nights for tourists featuring a compered costumed dance show and buffet dinner of Island-style foods. These Island Nights continue to be the most popular venue for tourists to engage with what they understand to be ‘authentic’ Cook Islands culture.

Now many of the performers from this earlier era lament the loss of motivation to perform for what they describe as ‘just the love of dancing’. They see contemporary youth as interested more in financial gain and sport. But tourism, while contributing to the transformation of life in the Cooks, from a subsistence to capitalist economy, has also kept aspects of culture - especially dance - alive. Danny Mataroa reflects,
Now the youngsters ... unless you have a tour that you are going to have at the end of the year, they won't come and join. It is very hard to find young women, young men who will join just for the fun of it, eh.

They go hand in hand [tourism and culture]... if we don't have tourists we don't get dance teams. Nobody will get a dance team just to show to locals again. No, they won't. They're not interested. They'd rather get some music and play the music and have a barbecue but if you have somebody from outside the Cook Islands they will say 'that's us, over there performing'.

Rarotongan dancer, choreographer and co-leader of one of Rarotonga's foremost dance troupes 'Orama, Georgina Keenan Williams states,

... tourism has its good points, it gives us an excuse to dance... without tourism we would probably still be dancing in packing sheds, I don't think our dance would have advanced so much (Cook Islands Press, Sunday 5-12 July 1998, p. 4-5).

She and choreographer Tepoave Raita point to the need for development of Cook Islands' dance. They acknowledge that the introduction of the National Dancer of the Year competition and the team competitions during the Constitution Celebrations have raised the standard of dancing. It is indeed these competitions together with the past fifteen years of increased tourism (creating the need for cultural entertainment in the hotels) that many dancers and choreographers see as the reasons for the continuing interest in dance among youth (Cook Islands Press, Sunday 5-12 July 1998, p. 4-5).

Dancing is now what tourists associate with this place. Island Nights, tours, videos, and national events all represent samples of dancing from the various islands in an effort to portray the nation as unified but also diverse. More than anything else, dance, in the advent of the new island nation,

... has participated in an ideological transition away from a 'modern' nationalism of production, 'progress' and 'togetherness' towards a more postmodern nationalism of seduction, consumption and commodified indigenousness (Sissons, 1999: 107).

It is within this postmodern context of commodified indigeneity that I interpret the potency of contemporary performance in general. The incorporation of the 'ura piani in Island Nights and dance shows, such as indicated above in the narrative about the cultural village tour, exemplifies indigeneity at work in this commodified context.

Former dancer Doreen Kavana Boggs explains how the 'ura piani is performed in non-tourism settings.

There is an 'ura piani used for family gatherings it is done by song, so in the song you are inviting so and so to come up, you name so and so to come up. There'll be the man and then they name the woman that will dance with this [man] and then the band would sing a song, you know and the two would dance and then once they'd finish
they just keep singing until they call somebody, it would be your turn and then they pick a partner for you and you get up and you dance and so to me it’s an ongoing thing that we do and in our own private what-you-call it [places] but normally that’s when everybody’s really in the mood for it, you know when the band, when the string band notices how everybody’s enjoying themselves so they get everybody up to dance ... that’s another way of ‘ura piani you know - but that’s more controlled by the band. They just pick anybody out of the audience to come to the front and do it. But as for a group, [she refers to an Island Night show] because they’ve got to end the night, you know with a number, so they invite the audience to come in and be part of it (Interview, 2.11.98.).

Dance then, as we have seen in both these narrated performative contexts, is more than just a reflection of culture, it is an embodiment of relations of identity. Specifically here I have emphasised its uses as a vehicle for nationalism and for showcasing the nation to outsiders - through tours and Island Nights, but it should be also stressed that it is of course an intrinsic part of local identity and as such has fluidity and spontaneity. People will get up and dance in various situations - appreciation of another’s performance, after a speech, or simply because it makes them happy.

The presentation of food and invitation to eat is also an embodiment of relations of identity. Food, perhaps even more than dance, is performance because of its very mundaneness - we must eat. But who eats what, when and where and with whom are the clues to the significance of this everyday practice. The act of feeding someone, while certainly commonplace, is charged with significance. Josephine Baddley, in her thesis Rarotongan society: the creation of tradition (1978) emphasises the overt meaning of feeding compared to a Western obliqueness.


To feed someone in a Cook Islands context (and Polynesian context in general) is to look after them, and so to place them under a sense obligation. ‘Āngai; to feed, is applied to adopted children; tamaiti ‘āngai; adoptive parent being metua ‘āngai: the more direct English translation used in the Cook Islands is ‘feeding child’, and ‘feeding parent’ (mother or father). It is assumed that one’s children will look after one in old age.

The sharing of food with manu ‘irī also assumes a reciprocity of generosity. This is intrinsic to a Polynesian hospitality ethic and the concept discussed earlier - aro ‘a. The most elaborate and symbolically significant performance of feeding is

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the *umukai* or earth oven feast. Occasions calling for *umukai* include: titles (investitures of chiefs), when a child is given to adoptive (feeding) parents, request to *köpū tangata* for use of land, a change in a person’s kinship status ie. birth, adoption, haircutting ceremony, twenty-first, marriage, christening, funeral, and also for welcomes and farewells. In an indigenous context this is a performance of inclusion but also a statement of hierarchy, expressed through the distribution of foods. In a wedding for example, the bride’s family may be given a pig from the groom’s family. The *ariki* will be given the head of the pig; the *mata ‘iapo*, the fore and hind quarters; the *rangatira*, the ribs; and the remainder of the pig is given to the untitled.

Feasting is both an intrinsic part of looking after *manu ‘iri* and of performances for tourists. Talking to Danny Mataroa about putting on events for outsiders I asked him to describe for me what an Island Night might comprised. He recounted a smorgasbord of idealistic proportions.

An Island Night would be a place that is mostly in a restaurant or a nightclub or hotel where you have mostly local foods, for example *taro*, *rūkau* which is the young leaves of the *taro*, you gotta have pork, and *mitiore*, which is grated coconut with shellfish, and you will have *pā’ua* or clams, *kumera*, *manioa*, *poke*... and raw fish of course, you gotta have *ika mata* marinated fish in coconut cream and lime... ah man it’s making me hungry already, but that’s the food part, eh (Interview, 12.12.98.).

I found it interesting that in telling me about the food presented at an Island Night Danny referred to *pā’ua* and *mitiore* - foods I had not seen on regular offer for an Island Night. He seemed to be conjuring up in his mind’s eye the best a Cook Islander might hope to display. Perhaps idealistically this is what Cook Islanders wanting to represent themselves in the best possible light might present, and/or might want to receive should they be the guest at an *umukai*.

In narrating events people often focused on the food - giving their opinion about whether there was enough food on offer, and whether the right types were present. Talking to friends on Rarotonga about trips I had taken to outer islands a constant question was ‘what did you eat there?’ People wanted to know what food had been available and in what quantities. This was asked of everyday contexts and of tours and Island Nights as well as other occasions I recall such as a funeral, and a twenty-first birthday celebration.

In tourism contexts the performance of feeding ‘guests’, like the performance of dance, separates out a component of ‘culture’ for consumption. But it also must work with the indigenous meanings associated with the performance itself. For a tour such as the cultural tour narrated above the food presented to the ‘guests’
takes on some of the attributes of the umukai. It is able to be associated with an umukai because it is prepared away from the gaze of the tourists and presented to them after they have been told about the way an umu is prepared and cooked; it is presented on woven plates and eaten with hands and has the look of a ‘traditional’ feast; and it has some of the items on the plate that an umu would contain - chicken, taro, rūkau. It is also able to be understood as a performance of umukai in that plenty of food is served, the right combinations of foods are served - chicken with taro, taro with rūkau;\(^{17}\) and that feasting occurs alongside dance.

**Performance as tour participation**

I now want to consider in more depth the implications of people, place and time for performances of this type - those primarily for tourism audiences. How does this differ from performances such as the national Constitution Day parade? In what ways might they be similar? And finally what might we assume about performance’s role in the generation and maintenance of identity.

Discussing the ‘us’ and ‘them’ aspect of performance earlier I referred to its illusory quality and Dening’s shared space of viewing between audience and performers. I suggested that shared illusion frees performance and gives space for a sense of experimentation with possibilities. In support of a broader and less rigid approach to studying tourism I concur with the views of Michel Picard, Marie-François Lanfant and Edward Bruner - that tourism is within culture and not necessarily an external impact on culture. This allows an evaluation of the assumptions made by Cook Islanders about tourists, and in particular their reaction to backpacker tourists in the Constitution Day parade, as evidence of a less prescribed treatment of tourists. The attitude that newcomers to the islands should participate in local events to experience life there is in accordance with the indigenous concept of aro’a. In this section I want to examine experimentation in performance further and consider the implications of this for a specifically tourist audience. How performances develop depend on the contexts of their production - crucially on who the performers are in relation to who the audience is. In a more defined setting such as a tour there may be more delineated boundaries between ‘us’ and ‘them’.

In the narrated performance of the cultural tour the audience comprises outsiders, in a particular context. How the outsiders, ‘tourists’ in this context, are construed draws on a history of experience with who these tourists are, where they are from and how they behave in dialogue with the people of the place. The way tourists relate to food and dance - key components of Polynesian hospitality and of tours - establishes a basis for communication and identification between parties.

\(^{17}\) Foods are considered to go with one another (kīnaki) to comprise a meal. Certain foods are kīnaki for each other such as taro and chicken, and rūkau and taro.
One of most obvious differences in the two performances narrated in this chapter would have to be their very presentation - one appears spontaneous, the other is practised, routinised, and already known. What is performed for this audience and how it is done, is part of quotidian life at this place. The tour operates every day Monday through Friday - the tourists come and pay their money; the staff perform and receive their pay packet. Nonetheless, despite this very circumscribed performance of rehearsed dialogue, practised jokes, repeated dances, meals, questions, smiles - there is a deeper sense of significance in the representation of identity to an audience of outsiders. The participation of newcomers in eating and dancing is not merely a generic gesture of touristification. It is connected to the strong sense of Polynesian hospitality - a negotiation of outsiders - discussed earlier.

The outsiders in this sense are tourists - however as mentioned earlier they are often not referred to as tourists but Papa‘ā, often regardless of whether or not they are European. Mostly the people who come on this tour are Western tourists - European, Canadian, Australian or New Zealanders. Many are middle-aged while some are younger couples in their twenties and thirties, and a few people come with children. Some come in groups - Germans especially come with their own tour guide to translate. They come on the tour as a way of finding out more about the culture of the place they are visiting usually for a one to two week stay (personal communication with tourists, 1998).

The literature on the anthropology and sociology of tourism as well as raising the problem of us and them as a guest/host dichotomy poses the question of ethnic relations. An early article on the subject of tourism as ethnic relations by Pierre Van den Berghe (1980) suggests that the central exploitable element in tourism is exoticism. A key part of this exoticism for the tourists is the natives. He writes

Even if the tourist perceives the native as a mere extension of the exotic fauna, as he often does, and even if his human contacts with him are transient, mercenary, superficial and caricatural, as they typically are, the native is still there (Van den Berghe, 1980: 377).

Van den Berghe (1980), and Van den Berghe and Keys (1984), point to a marked asymmetry in the relationship between what they call tourists and tourees (hosts). There is no denying that some tourists come to look at others, to view for entertainment a life which is not theirs, and to even assert their own sense of superiority, or relief at being able to assume their own comfortable lives which are in contrast to the strange lives they witness while on holiday in remote places. But I disagree with Van den Berghe’s assumption that this is a static relationship. This denies scope for change or challenge. It is through performativity that I argue we do witness challenges to the equation of tourist with spectator and touree with performer.
Tim Edensor, in his article ‘Staging tourism: tourists as performers’ (2000) might disagree with Van den Berghe’s supposition that tourists gaze in fairly fixed and circumscribed ways at others. He favours the view that tourists change their perspectives and their performances because of the shifting cultural contexts from which they come (2000: 325). Edensor’s consideration of performance is insightful in its detailed consideration of spatial contexts (‘enclavic’ and ‘heterogeneous’) in which tourists perform mainly ‘staged roles’. But like Van den Berghe he largely disregards the perspectives of the peoples with whom tourists interact. Edensor situates performance in the relationship between tourist and site (2000: 326). He relegates the people from places that are ‘sites’ for tourists, to roles as ‘stage managers’, ‘choreographers’ and general regulators of tourist performances, rather than participants within the same performance.

Both Jill Sweet (1989) and Sylvia Rodriguez (1998) have analysed touristic performances which challenge the sense of the peoples visited by tourists as objects of a purely spectator gaze. Jill Sweet (1989: 63) asks how Pueblo Indians make the tourist ‘invasion’ meaningful? She discusses Pueblo Indians’ performances, in particular the humorous imitations of non-Pueblo, as a vehicle for incorporating these strangers into the Pueblo world, for transforming threatening or perplexing situations into the comical and harmless (1989: 62). As she explains, tourists are sometimes encouraged to participate in the burlesques but always on Pueblo terms. This appears to be an example of relations of us and them being worked out, vindicated even, through performance.

Sylvia Rodriguez takes a similar stance in her article ‘Fiesta time and plaza space: resistance and accommodation in a tourist town’ (1998) in which she argues for a politicised understanding of festival. She considers the reclamation of the urban plaza area once a year for the fiesta in the town of Taos, New Mexico. This public space of the plaza was formerly a centre of the community but is now mainly occupied by tourists. The performance of the fiesta simultaneously reinforces the status quo of the plaza now being the domain of commerce and outsider interests in that the fiesta is the only time this is interrupted, yet the interruption undermines outsider control with a transformation of the public space into a celebration by, of, and for Hispanic Taos residents. This, Rodriguez (1998: 55) concludes is the ‘power, genius and irony’ of the fiesta [performance].

I do not propose that this highly politicised performativity of the fiesta is precisely what is happening on the village tour. But I do contend that there is a

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18 See Judith Adler’s ‘Travel as performed art’ (1989b) for a discussion of the historical development of tourist performance. Adler emphasises the role of guidebooks and travel accounts as scripts for tourists (actors) - shaping their performances.
sense of subversion at play in this performance, like that of the dancing backpackers. In presenting a unified sense of ‘us’ to a group considered ‘them’ they transform the perplexing into the comical (Sweet, 1989). They ensure the agency and to a degree the power resides with the observed rather than the observer. This is achieved by defining what is meant by ‘us’ and ‘them’, by setting and defining space between ‘us’ and ‘them’, and by marking what goes on inside that performative space.19

Firstly, we see the defining of ‘us’ and ‘them’ on the village tour. This is done with polite reference at times - speaking to the group in the common language, English, asking the group to consider how they do things ‘at home’, asking them to reply in local language, Māori, in short treating them as Papa’ā ‘guests’. But at other times the limits of being ‘them’ is defined more boldly, as in Mama’s exclamation over the German tourist who had walked into the area reserved for staff.

My presence perhaps provides an example of the varied ways in which outsiders are viewed and dealt with - especially in the sense of being a Papa’ā, a tourist and a ‘guest’ (manu’iri). I was at times considered by some of the tour guides to be a sort of tourist. I was a temporary visitor - only on the island for a year; I did not come to the tour every day as the guides did - I came once or twice a week. While I was there they would always tell me to go and watch the show at the end of the tour - like the other tourists I took a keen interest in observing and also participated in some activities. I was also a ‘guest’, in the manu’iri sense mentioned earlier. A meal was always provided for me even though I insisted that I didn’t want to be served and especially did not want to be eating the profits of the tour. At other times, and fleetingly, I felt like a tour worker - cooking food and helping with other duties. Although I am aware that this was very much contrived - I did not have to survive on these wages or feed a family on them, I was not presenting my culture, I was here only temporarily, not working on a longer term basis. In a sense I was a sort of mediator between ‘us’ and ‘them’ - helping to keep the tourists in the right place at the right time was a role which the tour guides sometimes assigned for me.

The assumption of us and them is crucial to the working of the tour. As suggested above by Van den Bergh (1980, 1984) and others, a core part of exoticism for tourists is to be found in the natives themselves. Presenting a tour aimed at culture requires performing that exotic element sought after by the outsiders. It is at times as if this is a meeting between these two groups - which is not contrived or constrained by the artifices of a tour. Both ‘ourselves’ - ‘us Cook Islanders’ -

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19 Here I draw on Gregson’s and Rose’s (2000) notion of spaces as performative of power relations.
and ‘them’ – Papa’ā (tourists/guests) are presented as homogenous groups. In fact it is a group of young people mostly from Arorangi village (five of them brothers and sisters) on Rarotonga presenting Cook Islands culture to disparate groups of Canadians, Americans, Australians, New Zealanders, Germans, Swedes of varying age, gender, and class ratios.

The tourees treat themselves as one and the tourists as one in a seemingly straightforward meeting of one group newly arrived in another’s place who must be taught to understand what it means to be the other. The tourists are therefore spoken to as a group. They are asked to respond as a group. The only exception is the splitting of the group at times into men and women and the singling out of a honeymoon couple for special treatment.

The establishment and performance of space between us and them further maintains the distinction, and ultimately reaffirms identity for both cohorts. This involves delimiting physical space and also discursive space. This works to constrain interaction between us and them but also importantly to define it in a way that will preserve the control in the hands of the people of the place. The segregated physical space helps keep in place the discursive space; in a sense what Greg Dening (1996) refers to as a shared space of viewing in which a conspiracy of illusions between audience and performers occurs.

Overarchingly the shared space of conspiracy entered into by tourists and performers on this tour is one of a resurrected past. It is known that Cook Islanders do not live this way - the tourists can see this from looking around the island that there are no huts like the ones in the village, people do not wear the clothes that the guides do in the village around in ordinary life. Yet - there is an image preserved for the duration of the tour of a cohesive village containing elements of past lives, and past peoples in the ancestors of the people here today - the tour guides.

Ironically, the separation out of several aspects of cultural life into a series of huts strengthens the notion of a cohesive village. This marking out of lived experience into distinct dwellings which are each visited in turn adds to the impression of tourists having not just encountered but entered into the homes (and hearts) of the ‘culture’. By the end of the tour, having been to each portion of the ‘culture’, tourists have a sense of Cook Islands culture in its entirety. A similar holism is created by the Polynesian Cultural Centre in Hawai‘i. There, the close proximity of huts each housing a different Polynesian island group gives the effect of a
compression between island groups and indeed Polynesian societies in close physical distance and cultural difference (Webb, 1994: 68). 20

What goes on in this shared space of tourists and performers gives little room for questions by tourists. They are given information and demonstration at each designated area. They are given a set amount of time. They see certain things and not others. They are spoken to as that group of outsiders throughout. But the performers play to their strengths. And the structured participation of the observers casts the performers in a certain light: hospitable, accomplished, accommodating Cook Islanders. Performance of us and them at times transcends the level of spectacle to embrace the embodied engagement of the onlooker as more than an observer.

**Tour time**

At the outset of this chapter I suggested that the constitution celebration is a performance in time and place of time and place. It both occurs at a particular moment and in a particular place and it performs other moments and places. Indeed, it is provocative in its manipulation of other times and places in the here and now. Following Dening’s (1996), Turner’s (1986), Myerhoff’s (1980) and Tilley’s (1997) insights I suggest performers are able to adopt a reflexive attitude to history.

The Constitution Day float parade performed both past and future in its celebration of a present moment - a present moment that in this performance celebrates the nation. National identity is both created and reasserted through performed dialogues with past representations and future visions - together with the engagement with another performance of past Cook Islanders by a group of tourists.

The tour performance, as I have already intimated, is different in that it is not spontaneous - it is rehearsed, and also in that there is not the degree of agency on the part of the outsiders, again tourists (‘them’). These tourists are less active than their performing counterparts in the parade - they have paid for a tour entitling them to watch a presentation, they will participate but they have no knowledge of this before the performance begins and, as outlined above, they enter into a circumscribed performative space between self/other (us/them) which although it

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20 Terry Webb’s analysis of the Polynesian Cultural Centre as tourist art emphasises the PCC as conveying a specifically Mormon narrative of the ‘dread of precipitous destruction’ of Polynesian (and implicitly all) societies unless they can be saved (1994: 78). Although the Cook Islands Cultural Village too is owned and operated by a Mormon family, there is little specific religious reference. The noticeable difference in the CICV’s representation from other tours is that the women do not wear coconut bras for their dance costumes and so do not reveal their midriff. (See photographs).
allows for interaction does so in a far more constrained way. Nonetheless, there is
still an effort on the part of the performers to include the observers. It is this
participation which I suggest is connected to the concept aro’ a, which embraces
the welcoming of newcomers and sharing. 21 Dancing and feasting are means
through which aro’ a is performed. In both these performances we see how
newcomers are encouraged to dance and, in the latter, feast and so enter into a
particular relationship with people and place - ultimately asserting the identity of
Cook Islanders.

In this context - the cultural tour performance - it appears to be cultural identity
that is more pronounced while national identity is asserted in the former
performance of constitution. But, as anthropologist Jeff Sissons argues, the two
can be conflated. Indeed, Sissons (1997) claims that tourism is directly connected
to a wider agenda of what he terms Cook Islands’ ‘ethnicization’ - the
deployment of ‘culture’ in a post-colonial re-imagining of the Cook Islands.
Tourism is promoted by the state in an effort to situate the Cook Islands as an
independent, democratised, and ‘modern’ state committed to economic
development through a growing sense of nationalism. Thus national identity
becomes equated with ‘Cook Islands cultural pride’ in tourism’s promotion of the
former in the guise of the latter. 22 Tourism is utilised to realise a vision of the
Cook Islands as a Māori nation.

So, while it seems that the two performances might have quite distinct agendas -
national pride and cultural commodification - such a clear distinction is hard to
make. Thus, performance of being Cook Islanders entails representing a sense of
the nation as a whole and a sense of a homogeneous culture - Cook Islands
Māori. The similarities between the two performances are as important as their
differences.

Let us look more closely at what is represented on this cultural tour with regard to
time and place. A poignant difference in the two performances occurs in
reference to other times. As mentioned in discussion of the Constitution Day
parade performance the future is a significant component embodied especially in
the youth of today/future leaders float in which high school students dress in
professional clothing gesturing to future career employment. Prime Minister Sir
Geoffrey Henry’s rhetoric also imagined a future of ‘economic and social

21 See Chapter Three for reference to the misrepresentation and essentialisation of aro’ a by travel writers.

22 See also Robert Foster’s (1995) study of the connection between advertisements and nationmaking in Papua New Guinea which suggests that in presenting constructs of the nation advertisements have the ability to define the terms of membership within the nation.
development, prosperity and happiness, self-reliance dignity and national pride’. The future is not performed in this specifically tourist-orientated instance. It is the past to which attention is drawn in representing people and place.

This audience, although changing members daily, is assumed to have a collective interest in viewing culture in a particular light. This view or tourist gaze, as John Urry (1990) has termed it, is constructed through difference. Edward Bruner talks of the viewing enacted by the elite in first world cities as an overlooking of the Other in their midst, but when in touristic borderzones ‘there is a voyeurism, an overabundance of seeing, a cornucopia of visualisation - almost a pathology, a scopophilia’ (1996: 160).

The tourist gaze is constructed, as Urry (1990) explains,

in relationship to its opposite, to non-tourist forms of social experience and consciousness ... [It] ... presupposes a system of social activities and signs which locate the particular tourist practices, not in terms of some intrinsic characteristics, but through the contrasts implied with non-tourist social practice (Urry, 1990: 2).

The tourist audience that comes to this performance has paid to see culture. They seek in this sense a representation of an ‘authentic’ culture - authenticated in this instance in a ‘pure’ indigenous sense, that is in a supposedly unchanging, natural state before any colonial engagement. Many have come to see a glimpse of the past - what it was like before people like themselves (tourists, missionaries, Europeans) were here.

Some of the comments about tours made by tourists who had made this specific tour as well as others on Rarotonga support this interest in contrasting the present with the past, in particular a past which is associated with the sense of authenticity mentioned above.25

If they’re run by locals, they are good for learning about the real life or culture, but they can be touristy. Good tours involve unspoilt areas. (Sarah, a twenty-nine year old English woman).

This gave me an understanding of how life has been and how the customs started, and through talking to people about their lives it helps understand life now and how difficult it is. (Anna, a thirty-one year old New Zealand woman).

23 Given the current increase in out migration for the Cook Islands this emphasis on future prosperity ‘at home’ could be seen as a rather optimistic sentiment.

24 Recall the previous chapter’s discussion of authenticity. Here tourists seek an ‘authentic’ experience in that the past represented for them is in general keeping with their imagined notions of traditional Pacific Islanders.

25 These comments are taken from some of the casual conversations I had with tourists on various tours over the year.
Others may not have mentioned the past so explicitly but commented on an interest in difference more in terms of what is done in this place - a distinction made between the here and there, between our place at home and their place; our holiday destination.

It is good to see other cultures. I did this because I wanted to experience culture and dancing... I enjoyed the food and the dancing. (Mark, a twenty-three year old English man).

The people here involved have a passion for their history. (Rachel, a twenty-four year old English woman).

I look for a bit of culture and entertainment in a tour of this sort. I enjoyed the humour and the history, the traditional food, and dancing at this tour. (Maria, a twenty-nine year old Canadian woman).

However, looking for a sense of the past and for experience of culture while on holiday are some of the very reasons other tourists give for not going on tours of this kind. Many of these people stated their dislike of tours because of perceived inauthenticity. They often mentioned not seeing the real culture, being presented a commercialised view of culture, preferring to find or ‘discover’ off the beaten track places and have encounters with people which were more genuine because of their non-touristic nature, having to comply with other tourists, or feeling rushed and not treated as an individual, as specifically detracting from their sense of obtaining a understanding of culture, and implicitly also how this place was lived in the past. As I noted in the previous chapter engaging in authentic experiences of the other - such as a respected cultural tour (or indeed, the stance of avoiding tours altogether and making one’s own discoveries) - affirms one’s own authenticity as a discerning traveller (in Selwyn’s (1996) sense, ‘authenticity of the self’).

Whereas in the former narrated performance of Constitution Day parade tourists actually constructed their own performance of the past in dressing and acting in part as they assume traditional Cook Islanders may have (although of course this is not a performance they are taking seriously, it is for fun primarily), in this context they have come to watch the past performed for them. They sit in opposition to this past and marvel from a (post)modern stance at difference between themselves and those past people, difference between those past peoples and contemporary Cook Islanders, difference between themselves and these contemporary Cook Islanders.

Bruner (1996: 161) writes of a constructed racialisation at home and a primitivization over there, in ‘exotica’, by Western tourists who construct separate geographies - ‘home’ in which the Other is not welcome but associated with problems such as crime, poverty, violence - -and in their place - the
destination - Western elites pay for the pleasure of photographing, and viewing the other as somehow distinct from those in the home context. Tourists, he states, do not travel to experience the new postcolonial subject, the emerging nation in process of economic development; they yearn for their image of a pre-colonial past. As Bruner suggests this is indeed an idealised image, but in the performance itself, this view is more difficult to sustain, that is it is less easy to spectacularise when one is seeing from within the spectacle itself. Participation alters the position of viewing and in so doing challenges a fixed sense of tourist gaze.

I mentioned earlier, in discussion of Bruner’s (1996) view of tourism’s voyeurism, the term ‘touristic borderzone’. This is a term he borrows from studies considering the US/Mexican border as a site of migration between two nation states. Bruner’s touristic borderzone is one where,

...the natives have to break out of their normal routines to meet the tourists: to dance for them... to display themselves and their cultures for the tourists’ gaze...the touristic borderzone is like... an empty stage waiting for performance time, for the audience of tourists and for the native performers (1996: 158).

But is it always constructed this way? Are these ‘dancing natives’ breaking out of their normal routines? What I suggest through these performative contexts; a cultural tour performance and a national Constitution Day parade, is that it is these very ‘normal’ aspects of culture - especially feasting and dancing - which are performed to tourists and involve tourists. In this way maybe the borderzone is not ‘empty stage-like’ at all but rather it can accommodate efforts aimed at subverting just such a purely exoticist gaze.

Discourse concerning the past is infused throughout this performance but it is not simply an essentialised pre-colonial, pre-modern primitivism - the antithesis to an essentialised, civilised Western modernity that is performed. That is too formulaic an appreciation of performance that as we have seen does not take place in such an simplistic manner. The performers see to it that the past they perform buttresses a sense of themselves as much more than quaintly deficient of modernity, but rather erudite in specialist technologies.

The Cook Islands Cultural Village information booklet suggests a role for tourism performance in mediating between past and present. It states:

[It] is important that we retain the best of ourselves as a nation, that we recognise who we are and wear it proudly. We are fast becoming caught up with pressures and influences from outside, with the accompanying danger that we could lose our way.

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26 Bruner (1996: 158) cites Gloria Anzaldua (1987), Guillermo Gomez-Pena, Emily Hicks (1991), and Coco Fusco (1989) who use the concept of the borderzone in their theorisation on the US/Mexican border but insists that touristic borderzones differ in that there are no immigrant tourists - they are ‘there’ but shift in that individuals come and go (1996: 158).
Fortunately we are a proud people and so understand that we must hold fast to our past. Our heritage - our history, our culture, our arts, dance, songs, chants, legends and music - identifies us and makes us who we are. This is our uniqueness (1995: 25).

On the tour, examples of this are apparent. In the fishing hut the tourists are shown sandals for walking on the reef,

... our ancestors had their own Reebok shoes. They needed protection from the reef as coral cuts can get infected. These reef shoes were made from the bark of the ‘au tree [hibiscus] - they are thick and flexible like a roman sandal or like reeboks or nikes.

In the medicine hut another comparison with a Papa‘ā item is made,

You may have been wondering about this Cook Islands chandelier. This has tuitui or candlenut threaded on and this is set alight - as it burns it gives off light and also smoke - so it is an electric light and mosquito coil all in one.

In telling of how the ancestors lived their lives there is an air of dignity almost as if the ancestors too had choice but chose a Cook Islands way to do things.

In addition to representing their ancestors’ skill these Cook Islanders of the present perform their selves as highly adept at amalgamating this indigenous knowledge with other introduced technologies. So we witness in the narrative the performers at ease with things Papa‘ā and things Māori - they eat Twisties and uto, they weave plates and cook on a gas oven, they speak English and Māori. This is nothing startling, what I am drawing attention to here is not just their lived experience but their representation of themselves as having mastery over both. James thus gently mocks Papa‘ā technology as inefficient when it comes to opening coconuts demonstrating superior skill with a correctly wielded rock. He admits that the traditional method of grating coconut with pearl shell is not as productive as steel but reclaims this steel as ‘our way’ by renaming it ‘Cook Islands steel’ - the grater reinforces Cook Islands ingenuity at technological adaptation even further, it is made from another unrelated object, a truck spring. Likewise cigarette lighters, washing machines, knives and forks and other Papa‘ā consumer items are mentioned in passing in such a way as to imply a local proficiency with them but ultimately the ability to pick and choose between these and traditional ways. 27

Today when we want to dye our skirts we just go down to our pharmacy and pick out the colour we want - orange, red, blue...

Emma, the guide demonstrating costumes, concluded after a detailed description of how skirts are made from hibiscus bark in the traditional way.

Emma talks about contemporary methods for dying costumes and then shows the tourists tapa cloth worn in pre-colonial times. (Kristina Jamieson, 1998).

The making of ‘Rolex’ watches from kīkau (coconut leaf) in the weaving hut gestures jokingly not only at Papa’ā reliance on technology for assessing the stage of the day, but perhaps also at a difference between ‘Papa’ā’ and ‘Māori time’ - the former perceived by people here as an obsession with being places and doing tasks at precise moments - a different approach to their own more fluid one. Moreover it is another demonstration of the skill it takes to do something ‘our’ way - as most of the tourists Rolex’s slip from wrists shortly after their construction. The final joke is on the audience when the watch-making performance culminates in the guide asking

Now - can anyone tell me the time?

It is this proficiency at moving between the reified categories of old and new, yours and ours, here and there, which serves to undermine a purely colonialist tourist gaze on the native. This means that the tourists get the past they have come to see but they also get the contemporary wielding of the past and a declaration of the ingenuity of the ancestors. In doing this, the passivity of the tourist is turned into action in confluence with the reinforcement of the prowess of the performers.

**CONCLUSION**

This chapter has explored the embodiment of narrative as performance. Establishing performance and performativity as critically dialogical the
discussion has examined the between-ness of audience and performers (us and them), places of these participants (here and there), and significant moments in time in relation to the time of the performance (now and then).

Specifically I have argued here for a strong connection between performance and identity production and reiteration. Rather than inauthenticating culture as commodity I have suggested that the presence of tourists at performances can heighten a sense of ‘us’ - the identity of the performers. Indeed, in agreement with Jeff Sissons who contends that tourism has become a vehicle for national identity making in the Cook Islands, I would add that it is through continuous performance of this Cook Islands identity to both inside and outside audiences that reified images of passive ‘hosts’ are challenged. Performance in this context requires action on the part of performers and participation from audience. Making spectacle into performance transforms the passivity of tourist gaze and reinstates the power to represent the performers’ own identity. This identity as I have suggested is not without its politics - it is primarily a national iterated self - drawing on elements of the other islands in the nation state but asserting a holism with Rarotonga at the core.
Epilogue

UNSETTLING A NARRATIVE

In unsettling a narrative about the impact of tourism as an outside force on unwitting victims, I have consciously written against a trope that situates Pacific Islanders as remote peoples trapped on islands, who are forced to accept tourism as a tide of change that threatens to wash away their very identity. I have written against easy delineations between people and between the categories used to contain people and experience. I have written about the movements of people from the Cook Islands (living in the islands and in the diaspora) alongside those who travel there for holidays. I have narrated myself as a tourist but also an anthropologist. I have positioned excerpts of text, in places precariously, in relation to each other to emphasise the uneasy and layered complexity of lived experience in the Cook Islands.

But unsettling one narrative must involve some degree of settling with another. This ethnography is a narrative of the engagement of tourists and Cook Islanders with each other and with the representations of people and place that come into play in a context of tourism. It is also a narrative of an anthropologist’s engagement with, and entanglement in, the lives of Cook Islanders and tourists, and her consideration of the politics of representation in both tourism and anthropology.

TOURISM/CULTURE

I have argued throughout that we need to consider tourism and culture together, rather than as somehow separated spheres of experience. My approach to this challenge has been to reveal the complexities of interactions between tourists and those from the places that tourists visit, and to provide a more thorough interpretation of representations of people and places within the tourism industry. This is most certainly not to argue that tourism and culture are a happy or easy alliance, or that indigenous peoples’ experiences within the tourism industry are benign. The onus is on researchers to look to how people live their lives with tourism - encompassing expressions of resistance and assertion of local identities alongside apparent acceptance of tourists, tourist practices, and representations of peoples and places promoted by the tourism industry.

Michel Picard, among others, argues against an epistemological delineation of tourism and culture. He stresses their entanglement with particular reference to dance performances in Bali. The Balinese, Picard observes, have been unable to

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1 See Chapter Six’s discussion of this perspective also taken by Marie-Françoise Lanfant (1995) and others.
maintain a boundary between the performances for their own use and those intended for tourists (1996: 182).

In becoming Bali's *brand image* - that which marks the uniqueness of its tourist product, that by which the island of Bali tries to distinguish itself on a highly competitive international market - culture has become, indissociably, the *identity marker* for the Balinese, that which characterises them as a particular society, that by which they define and recognise themselves ... Thus it is that the Balinese, enjoined to preserve and promote their cultural identity in reference to the outside world's view of them, have come to search for confirmation of their "Balinese-ness" in the mirror held to them by the tourists (1996: 197. Emphases in the original).

Founded on a colonial history replete with representations of the island as an alluring paradise, the promotion of cultural tourism has rendered the Balinese self-conscious about their culture. In effect, tourism has consolidated an idea of Balinese culture for tourists and Balinese. So for Balinese, the emphasis on showing culture for others has moulded their internal sense of 'us'.

The complexity of the tourism/culture relation in the Cook Islands is apparent in the context of tourism-led economic development. Since the 1980s this has preoccupied both public and private sectors (Sissons, 1994) engaged in a symbiosis of nation-making and tourism. Further, the entanglement of tourism and culture is clear in performances that are both self-conscious and other-conscious. When tourists are present at performances it does not imply that they are the only audience.

I have suggested throughout this study that considering contemporary experiences of tourism affords an understanding of the complexity of various assertions of identities. Moreover, colonial connections are not forgotten. They are continuously evoked in performances for tourists and for Islanders, in allusions to local and regional contexts and in references to past and present moments. In the Cook Islands tourism is not seen as a phenomenon to be

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2 See Chapter Two for further elaboration of this and Jeff Sissons' publications on nationalism in the Cook Islands (1994, 1997, 1999).

3 At a national level the Cook Islands continues to define itself, and is defined, in relation to New Zealand (since self-government, in free association). It is also defined in relation to other nations in the Pacific, as one of a region of Pacific Island micro-states and a member of several regional organisations including the South Pacific Forum and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community. Internationally, the Cook Islands is a member of UNESCO and WHO and has representation in the European Union through New Zealand. Cook Islanders living in the Cook Islands define themselves in relation to diasporic Cook Islanders living in New Zealand and elsewhere through kinship connections.

4 See the narrated events referred to in Chapters Two (the opening of the international airport) and Six (the Constitution Day parade and a cultural tour) and these chapters' discussions of the representations of identities - 'selves' (Cook Islanders and the Cook Islands) in relation to 'others' (New Zealand, Britain (and implicitly the British monarchy), and tourists).
managed outside of culture (in a broad sense of how people live and express who they are).

But how is the articulation of tourism/culture experienced elsewhere in the Pacific? The Cook Islands’ approach of inclusivity toward tourists, may occur in other places, but it is certainly not a generic response to tourism by all Pacific Island societies. The Pacific Island state of Hawai‘i has a significantly different history and experience of tourism. It has a one hundred and fifty year long history as a tropical island tourist destination. Indeed, Hawai‘i has long been represented as the proto-typical paradise of the Pacific. The same questions can be asked of the representations of people and place and how these are played out within a context in which tourism has become a way of life for many indigenous Hawaiians. But the answers to these questions will most certainly differ from those given by Cook Islanders. Divergent colonial histories have had a crucial impact on the experience of tourism as part of culture, or as alien and antagonistic to it.

Tourism and colonialism - Hawai‘i

Bryan Farrell states that possibly the most telling source of Hawai‘i’s alienation lies in history (1982: 235). Unlike the Cook Islands, Hawai‘i, has had a long history of tourism complicit with an ongoing colonial experience of dramatic loss. The Cooks, and many other Pacific societies, also experienced loss with early contact - most notoriously, population decimation due to introduced diseases and the missionaries’ ban of cultural practices and destruction of artefacts. But the Hawaiian colonial experience differs from the Cook Islands’ in significant ways.

In addition to massive depopulation and the prohibition of the hula, and other cultural practices, the loss which heralded the most pervasive lasting legacy for indigenous Hawaiians was the loss of their land. In 1843 the instigation of the

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5 See Earnest Beaglehole’s *Social change in the South Pacific* (1957) for a consideration of changes to Aitutaki and Rarotongan societies from early missionisation in the 1820s through to New Zealand administration in the 1950s. See also Richard Gilson’s *The Cook Islands 1820-1950* (1980) and Dick Scott’s *Years of the Pooh-Bah: a Cook Islands history* (1991).

6 There has been considerable debate about Pacific, and Hawaiian, depopulation. David Stannard’s (1989) research on Hawai‘i suggests that population counts of island communities at contact dramatically underestimated the numbers of people. Stannard predicts that at contact Hawaiians numbered between eight hundred thousand to a million but by the 1890s the indigenous population was only forty thousand (1989: 79). See also McArthur (1967) and Bushnell (1993) for further discussion of Pacific depopulation.

7 This loss of land associated with the Māhele was followed by further losses: the overthrow of the Hawaiian monarchy in 1893, the banning of the Hawaiian language in 1896, and the annexation of Hawai‘i to the United States in 1898. Indeed, contemporary Hawaiian cultural politics are defined and shaped by these losses - the outcomes of an imperial American stance. See Jonathon Kamakawiwo'ole Osorio (2001) for a consideration of the politics of identity in
Māhele provided for a rapid transference of previously communally owned lands to individual titles (Kame‘eleihiwa, 1992). Importantly, it allowed foreigners to own land (Trask, 1993: 8). As a result American-owned sugar and pineapple plantations burgeoned as Hawaiians were dispossessed from their own lands. The development and consolidation of the plantation economy set the scene for Hawai‘i’s future: outsider elite interests flourishing at the expense of indigenous Hawaiians’ access to their own land and resources. By 1888 three-quarters of all arable land was controlled by haole (white foreigners) (Trask, 1993: 8; Kent, 1983).

Bryan Farrell considers that alienation is grounded in the history of Hawai‘i but this history is not relegated to the past. He warns of ‘a new breed of colonizer: the developer, the hotel operator, the tourist and the mainland entrepreneur’ who practise a similar ‘patronage, exploitation and paternalism’ evident in earlier cross-cultural history (1982: 236).

Noel Kent (1983) observes that Hawaiian development reflects an alliance of elites. In the early 1900s descendants of traders and missionaries formed a conglomerate of business elites known as the ‘Big Five’ that controlled all facets of the local Hawaiian economy. In the 1950s after the stagnation of the sugar and pineapple industries the Big Five formed transnational corporations connecting land assets offshore - resorts and construction companies were financed, owned and operated by foreign parties (Minerbi, 1996: 192). With the incorporation of Hawai‘i as a state into the United States in 1959, the promotion of mass tourism was identified as the major future development option. This has consolidated indigenous marginalisation to resources. As Finney and Watson’s (1975) well-known edited book title suggests, tourism is indeed a ‘new kind of sugar’ for Hawai‘i. But whereas the profit from Hawai‘i’s sugar went to foreign elites resident in Hawai‘i, Hawai‘i’s tourism profit now goes to foreign elites located predominantly offshore.

Political scientist and indigenous Hawaiian rights activist Haunani-Kay Trask believes that corporate tourism has prostituted Hawaiian culture. For Trask, tourism continues the brutal history of colonialism. She states,

> From the banning of our language and the theft of our sovereignty to forcible territorial incorporation in 1959 as a state of the United States, we have lived as a subordinated Native people in our ancestral home (1993: 23).

Hawai‘i. Osorio stresses that indigenous Hawaiian conceptions of race and nationality are obscured by their historic relationship with America (2001: 365. My emphasis).

8 See Lilikalii Kame‘eleihiwa’s important analysis of the Māhele in her book Native land and foreign desires: Pehea la e pono ai? (How shall we live in harmony?) (1992).
Trask points to recent examples of inequalities faced by her peoples. Indigenous Hawaiians are outnumbered by tourists by thirty to one (the per annum average in the late 1990s was six million tourists to Hawai‘i). Personal income growth in Hawaii is the lowest in the United States. Many Hawaiians remain on trust lands or are homeless while land acquisitions for tourist complexes boom. Water supplies on O‘ahu are threatened, as are several species of plants and animals (Trask, 1993).

Hawai‘i is represented as a fictional fantasy - a place of respite from the harsh realities of contemporary urban life for Americans at leisure. Trask finds the romanticised images of Hawai‘i promulgated by the tourism industry complicit in the process of colonisation. Her critique, like that of Jane Desmond’s ethnography _Staging tourism_ (1999) (an historical and contemporary examination of tourism in Hawai‘i), points specifically to the tourism industry’s appropriation of the hula.

The young, beautiful, and slim ‘hula girl’ has become the icon for Hawai‘i as a tourist destination. Jane Desmond notes that these images of the ‘hula girl’ tend to show her alone or in a group of women seeming to beckon a male gaze and, more tangibly, male tourists. She reflects on the Western imagination’s connection of women and land through nature - a connection which suggests colonial conquest and sexual possession. In a conflation of the Hawaiian Islands with an idealised and eroticised notion of femininity (effected through the ‘hula girl’ icon) the message is that Hawai‘i and Hawaiian women are available and acquiescent.

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9 Jane Desmond (1999) compares the effect of the ‘hula girl’ imagery to Bernard Smith’s ‘soft primitivism’. She further considers the figure of the hula girl as part of an American racial discourse which compared ‘ethnic others’, favouring Hawaiians over Afro-Americans and Native American Indians.

10 See J. Kehaulani Kauanui’s (1998) article discussing Hawaiian indigenous women’s nationalist appeals to off-island Hawaiians to return home. Kauanui suggests that returning home can be symbolic or embodied as well as literal. Performing hula is a return home through an embodiment of ‘aloha spirit’ (Kauanui, 1998: 690). This assertion of indigeneity which draws on hula as an expression of ‘agency regarding sensuality and spiritual practice’ (Kauanui, 1998: 691) is at odds with the hegemonic notions of hula promoted through the tourism industry’s representation of the passive and compliant ‘hula girl’ as discussed by Buck (1993) and Desmond (1999).

See also Kathy Ferguson and Phyllis Turnbull’s (1999) analysis of the American military in Hawai‘i. The military, like tourism has appropriated symbols of Hawaiian-ness in ‘casual disregard for local culture and history’ (Ferguson and Turnbull, 1999: 98). Plastic leis are draped over navy ships’ bows, and dancers are invited to perform hula on docks and at service recreation centres. Further, military spokespersons trivialise the military’s presence in Hawai‘i as just another arrival alongside numerous others including the voyages of the ancestors of indigenous Hawaiians themselves (Ferguson and Turnbull, 1999: 98). Teresia Teaiwa has explored the relation between tourism and militarism through the concept of militourism (1994, 1999).
Dancing against a hegemonic beat

But while indigenous Hawaiians and hula have been and continue to be essentialised through the tourism industry, hula is also practiced as embodied resistance (Desmond, 1999; Buck, 1993). The performance of hula as resistance began with Kalākaua’s revival of hula and chanting in the 1880s (Kalākaua was the Hawaiian King from 1874 to 1891). Kalākaua’s efforts railed against the missionaries’ denigration of hula as “designed to promote lasciviousness” - in the words of Hiram Bingham, the leader of the first company of American missionaries (Buck, 1993: 155). Hula became a significant site of struggle between Hawaiian resistance and Western domination until the overthrow of the monarchy in 1893 (Buck, 1993: 155).

In recent times the hula is again performed in a context of nationalist celebration with strong reference to the earlier resistance efforts of Kalākaua. Since its beginning in the 1960s, the annual Merrie Monarch festival has been the premiere event for the celebration of hula and Hawaiian pride and identity. The “Merrie Monarch” was the derisive name given to Kalākaua by his critics who cited his encouragement of hula and chant as evidence of his unsuitability as ruler of Hawai‘i. The title the Merrie Monarch is now used rather as a mark of respect for Kalākaua’s contribution to hula and chant. The three day celebratory festival and competition is the scene for high debate over the interpretation and performance of chants and hula (Buck, 1993: 163).

Significantly, expressions of Hawaiian pride and identity occur primarily in alternative spaces to tourist venues. Tourism in Hawai‘i does not accommodate the same sense of indigenous Islanders performing for themselves that I have suggested occurs in the Cook Islands. As Buck states, Hawaiian culture is in effect ‘a subculture of the hegemonic culture’ (1993: 183). Tourism, Hawai‘i’s primary industry and purveyor of the privileged images for the destination, is further the predominant avenue for expression of hegemonic cultural concerns. These are the dominant capitalist concerns of consumption that drive the effort to maintain Hawai‘i as America’s exotic leisure island. As Ferguson and Turnbull reflect

The opportunity to enjoy blue skies, balmy weather, endless beaches, and intriguing local color is realised by “development” (1999: 39).

This development is accomplished through the historical machinations of American hegemony in Hawai‘i, not by or with the will of indigenous Hawaiians, who are marginalised within their own society.11

11 Further to the promoted image as a tropical island paradise, Hawai‘i is also represented as a place of multicultural harmony. Emphasis on the demographic population rather than socio-economic status obscures the inequalities among ethnic groups and endorses an ‘egalitarian model
Tourism industry representations of Hawai‘i and Hawaiians cut to the heart of debates about identity which are founded on a history of struggle for sovereignty. On indigenous Hawaiian discourse about identity Jonathon Osorio states that ‘no other question is as important to us and no other question is so seriously contested by others’ (2001: 361). Alienation from land and indeed from the means through which to proclaim an indigenous Hawaiian identity defined by indigenous Hawaiians has given rise to an indigenous discourse on sovereignty and identity politics which must make clear distinctions between ‘us’ and ‘them’. For many indigenous Hawaiians culture and tourism are thus necessarily separated.

Cook Islanders do not draw this line so markedly. While their colonial relationship is far from over, as I have outlined, they do not have the same grievances or extensive and continuing histories of loss. The ground beneath Cook Islanders’ feet offers a more solid platform on which to perform identity for selves and others. For Hawaiians, a minority in their own islands, tourism performances are contested grounds indeed.

But it is these expressions of acceptance and resistance that bring me back to my emphasis on the inextricable relationship between tourism and culture. For even in the Hawaiian context where the experience of colonial events has been one of great loss and marginalisation for indigenous Hawaiians, the hula, which has been used as a sign for Hawaiian allure in the eyes of outside interests, is concurrently performed in celebration of a proud indigenous Hawaiian identity and in resistance to mis-representation in other fora. It is vital that we understand local negotiations between tourism and culture and not just assume that people have a homogeneous experience of being ‘impacted upon’ by tourism. Acts of both acceptance and resistance are contingent on particular political histories.

Importantly, tourism is not a force in and of itself. It operates within broader configurations of political economy. Colonial experiences are important precursors to and continuing influences in the contemporary experiences of people trying to represent themselves and to manage their representations by others. The Cook Islands’ history of a rather benign rule by New Zealand and a continuing relationship of self-government in free association with New Zealand has meant Cook Islanders have made their homes there as citizens. This is a legacy that is important in how tourism is negotiated in the islands themselves. The tourism industry has dealt in representations of Cook Islanders and the Cook Islands which some may find simplistic or patronising - the prevailing emphasis of ethnic relations’ (Okamura, 1998: 276). Multiculturalism represents an argument for the status quo and views the sovereignty movement as a threat to its model of ‘harmony’ (Okamura, 1998: 283).

See Osorio (2001) and Kauanui (1999) for discussions about the politics of defining Hawaianness and the U.S. blood quantum requirement.
on Aitutaki's lagoon; the remoteness and implied quaintness of the outer islands; Cook Islanders as friendly and compliant people; the Cook Islands as New Zealand's tropical province - to name a few pervasive representations. But unlike Hawai'i, the present configuration of controlled tourism in the Cooks does not threaten the land tenure system, peoples' livelihoods or Cook Islanders' ability to assert the expressions of self they identify with as well.

**WITHIN A SEA OF ISLANDS**

The ethnography that I have written offers a specific consideration of those entangled in the workings of tourism in the Cook Islands. I have focused on people from Rarotonga, Aitutaki, Mangaia and Atiu and their engagement with tourism and tourists, and on tourists' experiences and reflections about people and places in the Cooks Islands. The tourism industry deals in sweeping representations of the Pacific Islands that have branded its them a series of 'paradises on earth', insinuating these paradise islands are treasures tossed across a vast ocean, awaiting 'discovery'. Against such homogenising hyperbole, I contend that one of ethnography's strengths is its attention to the particular experiences of people in relation to specific places. As a non-Pacific Islander researcher it is not my place to make sweeping statements about Pacific Islanders' experiences of tourism in general. I have taken care to avoid stereotypical, essentialising representations and tried to stay true to the Cook Islanders' experiences which I witnessed or was told of, and to those of tourists on holiday whom I met there. The discoveries I have sought have been connections between past and present representations and experiences of the Cook Islands and how these manifest in tourism there today.

In this epilogue I have drawn on scholarship on Hawai'i to reveal differences to the Cook Islands' experiences with tourism, but especially to reassert the necessity for research that scrutinises tourism and culture together rather than separated. We need specific studies of peoples' engagement with tourism and these studies need to be flexible enough to not be confined by physical terrain but rather led by peoples' lived experiences of places within historical and political contexts.

In closing I return to the image of the 'sea of islands'. Unlike the tourism industry's gloss of the Pacific as an idyllic paradise, a Pacific regional identity is claimed by Pacific Islanders themselves which does not ignore local differences. It celebrates these differences and a sense of community in being peoples of the Pacific Ocean - *Tagata Pasifika*. Vaine Rasmussen's poem 'Our Pacific' (2000: 399-400) resists a generalising of a Pacific experience but finds, like Epeli

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13 Here I refer to an understanding of place in that narrow sense by which some anthropology has sought to demarcate 'field'. See Chapter One.
Hau'ofa, continuity in the relation of people to the ocean. Her verse can be read as an assertion of a sentient Pacific, home to peoples of diverse political and historical experiences but still connected through their sea of islands and knowledge of their relationship to each other, their land and their sea.

**Our Pacific**

There is not one Pacific
There are many
From the solid slopes of Mount Hagen
and Porgera’s wealth in the west
To the Pearl locked islets
of Tuamotu’s east
From the chilly tips
of Maoridom’s south
To the borders of the northern territories
and her mysteries that span from equator
to Cancer.

There is not one troubled region
There are many
Trade links and nuclear free zones
cohabit with foreign assistance
and internal discord
my sister does not speak with me anymore
and old ways of doing things are re-looked at
Children go to faraway places
and babai pits lie idle and still.

There is not one Pacific
Only one common theme
That development is certain
Though foreign
And coconuts will continue
to fall,
The Pacific ocean will camouflage
superficial dreams
and the faint sound of drums
will still be heard
if we pause a while to listen.

Rasmussen writes of dramatic change and diversity across a Pacific Ocean which bears witness to malevolent forces of development but does not lose the power to remind her peoples of a ‘common theme’ - their presence in their land/seascape. Thus, falling coconuts, the sound of drums, and the omniscient power of the ocean to camouflage the superficial are reminders of constants amidst changes -
of what the land/seascape knows, has known and will know. In the end the onus is on us to be aware of our connection to places and to our place in them.
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Appendix I: Map representing geographical relation of the Cook Islands to other islands in the Pacific.
Appendix II: Map representing geographical relation of islands in the Southern Cook Islands group.